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SEX, SCANDAL & LIBERATION

AN ENDLESS SUMMER WITH SLOAN HARPER

PET OF THE YEAR RUNNER-UP
OLIVE GLASS

A DA VINCI OF THE DOLLAR:
ARTHUR J. WILLIAMS JR.

HOT LINES:
LEAH McSWEENEY TALKS TOXIC FEMININITY

THE DEATH OF THE
A.C.L.U.

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FROM THE EDITOR

EVER since I was a little kid, I've been drawn to the water. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that when I was three, I actually thought becoming a mermaid was a valid career goal. I was introduced to Disney's *The Little Mermaid,* and later the original Hans Christian Andersen fable–you know, the one where the prince ditches the mermaid for the princess next door, but the mermaid refuses to kill him to save her own life so she dies and turns into sea foam. (The Danes are such Debbie Downers.)

This issue was supposed to be all about victory and winning (for those of you who don't know what I'm talking about, google "Penthouse magazine" and "$11.2 million"). But what am I going to say about that? Besides, as the great American football coach Paul Brown once said, "When you win, say nothing, when you lose, say less." Bragging is tactless, and when you win, it's better to celebrate in silence. Let's just say that instead of unemployment, we got champagne.

In some kind of Freudian slip, I ended up putting all three of our models–Sloan Harper, Olive Glass, and Ari Dee–in the water during their shoots. When I think about it, these women would make fabulous mermaids. I might have called this the Water Issue if it weren't for Hot Lines columnist Leah McSweeney's fighting takedown of faux #MeToo celebrities, and Mitchell Sunderland's heavy investigation into sexual assault in the adult-film world. Though the images in this issue are all splish-splash sexy fun, the editorial is anything but watered-down.



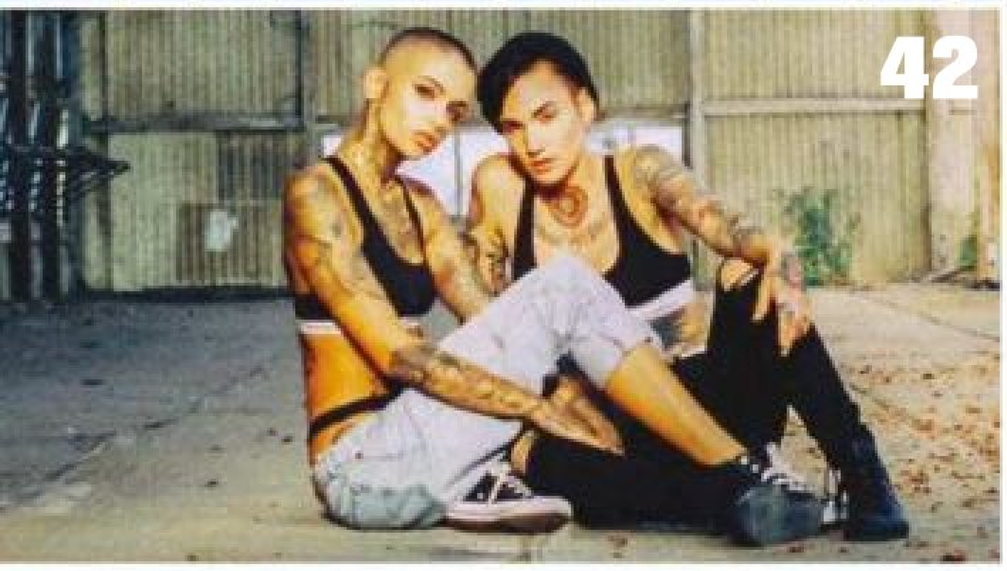
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INFINITE BETTY
August Pet of the Month
Sloan Harper













PENTHOUSE

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July Pet of the Month
Leigh Raven

MAIL DOMINANCE

Mish, I have been a subscriber for some time now, and I'd like to know if or when you would do a nice spread in the best damn magazine there is?! I would love to see your pussy on these pages.

—Lyle via email

[Ed: *Cry/laugh face emoji*]

It was really great to see Leigh Raven in *Penthouse*. What an incredibly sexy and unique model. I'm totally spellbound by her.

—J.J. via email

[Ed: Leigh Raven was a long time coming. Hers is my favorite shoot I've done at this magazine. You can't draw a face that perfect. God was clearly twiddling around in Leigh's mom's uterus.]

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

OPEN WIDE

I have always been a late bloomer. Daughter of conservative Italian-Catholics, I was raised in a house full of rosaries. The idea of living with a man before marriage was highly frowned upon. I lost my virginity at 19 and smoked my first joint at 21. Getting braces at age 34 seemed to follow my trend of always being late to the party. Trips to the dentist—or, in this case, the orthodontist—aren't normally things we look forward to. But that changed after I went in for a consultation with Dr. Martin.

Is this really my orthodontist? I thought when I met him. Dark-haired, handsome, and about my age, Dr. Aaron Martin extended a strong hand in greeting. As we shook, I found myself noticing his toned forearm and biceps in his scrubs.

"Anna, how are you today? Interested in braces, huh?" he said.

The impersonal feel of his office quickly melted away. I was glad I'd made some effort in terms of clothes and makeup before leaving my apartment that morning.

After a brief conversation about my teeth and their history, Dr. Martin created a digital simulation of my mouth and mapped out my problem areas, explaining how we would tackle them. He said that despite what I considered to be a shitshow in my mouth, he thought removable braces would work for me, and the timeline he mentioned wasn't too horribly long. But as he talked, I lost track of what he was saying, thinking instead about what was underneath his scrubs.

For my next appointment I dressed up. I sat in the chair wearing a snug red pencil skirt and a black off-the-shoulder top.

After reclining the patient chair, Dr. Martin leaned over me and at his direction I opened my mouth wide. His thigh touched my arm. His face was inches from mine. As he worked on the positioning of my new upper-teeth brace, he made conversation, and I tried to keep up, though speaking was difficult.

"So are you from Seattle?" he asked.

"No," I mumbled. "Moved here after college, about ten years ago."

"Where'd you go to school?"

"USF," I said, referring to the University of Southern Florida in Tampa.

"No way. I went to Miami. Are you from Florida?"

I had to resist the urge to shake my head, since his gloved fingers were in my mouth. "Nuh-uh," I said, speech still garbled. "Grew up in Chicago. Wanted some sun."

"Guess you got enough of it, huh? Moving to rainy Seattle. I've been here two years. Still not used to all the gray days. But I love the mountains. And the city."

After finalizing the fit of the braces, he raised the chair and I got up. For a quick second, Dr. Martin seemed to check me out, or at least I thought he did. His expression was unreadable.

Then, in a move totally out of character for me, I pulled out my business card and said, "Email and cell on here if you ever want to beat one of these gray days with a drink or something. We can commiserate."

He smiled and took the card. I had no idea if he was with anyone, but I didn't see a ring and he seemed okay with my invitation. A moment later I scurried out of there with my newly-minted brace face, worried that my impulsive act might have been ill-advised in terms of our doctor-patient relationship. What if I'd just screwed that up?

But a week later I got a text from him. I couldn't believe it. It was a gray day, with on and off rain, and Dr. Martin said he wanted to take me up on the drinks offer.

Wow. I kind of got nervous, not really expecting this to happen. But now it had. We picked a night three days later for our date, if that's what it was.

Getting ready, I felt super excited, in both a good and slightly tense way. I swigged a glass of wine before heading out, then took an Uber to a gastropub near Queen Anne hill that Dr. Martin knew.

We shook hands again, sat down, and ordered drinks. He was in a stylish navy shirt, and once again I found myself daydreaming about his clothes coming off. We made small talk, mentioning the weather, and then, after the first drinks arrived, he said, "You know, I've never done this before."

Even though I knew what he was referring to, I said, "You mean socializing with a patient?"

He nodded, adding, "But I am single. And I like talking to you. And the way you asked me out—it was pretty ballsy."

I smiled. I didn't see a need to explain that I wasn't the kind of person who would normally hand out her phone number in a





doctor's office, no matter how McDreamy the medical professional.

I took a sip of wine. He took a sip of his gin and tonic. I said, "I hope you don't mind that I'm not wearing my brace. I promise it's back in the second I'm home."

He laughed. "I'm just glad we can offer removables these days."

We had a few more drinks, then he asked if I wanted to see his place, a few blocks away. I said sure.

His apartment was on the 23rd floor of a residential tower with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the city and Puget Sound.

It was probably a combination of his place and the wine, but I remember briefly thinking of the book *Fifty Shades of Grey*. He poured two glasses of wine and we sat on a sofa, taking a moment to gaze silently out the big windows, the rain over, city shining.

Once again I surprised myself by making a move. I put my wine down, leaned toward him, and without a word I kissed him, my hand moving from his thigh to his crotch. Within seconds he was hard.

I opened his pants and began stroking his erection, lightly touching the head with my nails. Then I removed my shirt and bra, and saw his eyes take in my breasts, as if he'd been waiting for this moment. He took off his shirt, revealing a muscular torso, and I lowered my head between his legs and began to suck his cock.

I ran the tip of my tongue around his crown, licked up and down his shaft, and then took all of him into my mouth, making him sigh with pleasure. The mouth he'd mapped, my lips and tongue—it brought him to the edge. Stroking his balls, I was ready for him to come in my mouth, but he gently guided me away from his dick, stood me up, kissed me, caressed my breasts, and used his powerful arms to carry me to the kitchen island counter.

He sat my ass on the granite and knelt down as he slid my skirt and underwear down. He began to flick my clit with his tongue, then slid two fingers inside my wet pussy. His licking and finger-fucking carried me down the road to orgasm, but before I could come, he stood up and replaced his fingers with his cock. He fucked me hard, gripping my bare ass in his hands as he pounded my cunt for several delicious minutes until I wailed, coming.

As I sat there blissed out, he stripped fully, walked over to the wine, refilled our glasses, and returned. We sat side by side on the counter, sipping, luxuriating, and then he said, "Let's get closer to the windows. Beautiful night. And I have an idea."

He told me to hold on a moment and disappeared. When he came back, he led me toward the windows, turned me around before an easy chair beside the glass, wrapped his arms around mine from behind, and guided my hands until they rested on top of the chair. Then his hand began caressing my pussy and asshole and suddenly two steel balls, warmed by his other hand, slipped inside my cunt—Ben Wa balls, an experience, a sensation, new to me.

Using some of my wetness, he lubricated my other hole and teased it with the tip of his cock, sliding it along my crack, making me wait for what would happen next. My throbbing pussy clenched the two balls, which created a light, sweet pressure on my G spot.

Then his cock slid into my ass. I felt ripples of sensation, my cunt and asshole squeezing, my hips slowly bucking, his dick sending tingles down my legs. He pushed deeper and I moaned, the combination of the steel balls and his shaft creating a euphoria with an edge of masochism. The world swirled.

Hands on my hips, his breath coming fast now, he fucked my ass with a few more thrusts and we came together, both of us moaning, savoring the ecstacy.

He collapsed into the chair, and I joined him, our bodies slick with sweat, the city's glittering lights beyond the glass. "From now on," he whispered, "call me Aaron."

A week later I had to visit his office for an adjustment to the hardware in my mouth. After closing the door, he stood dangerously close to me, this time on purpose, and said, "It's another gray one today. But you know, you've changed my mind about this weather."

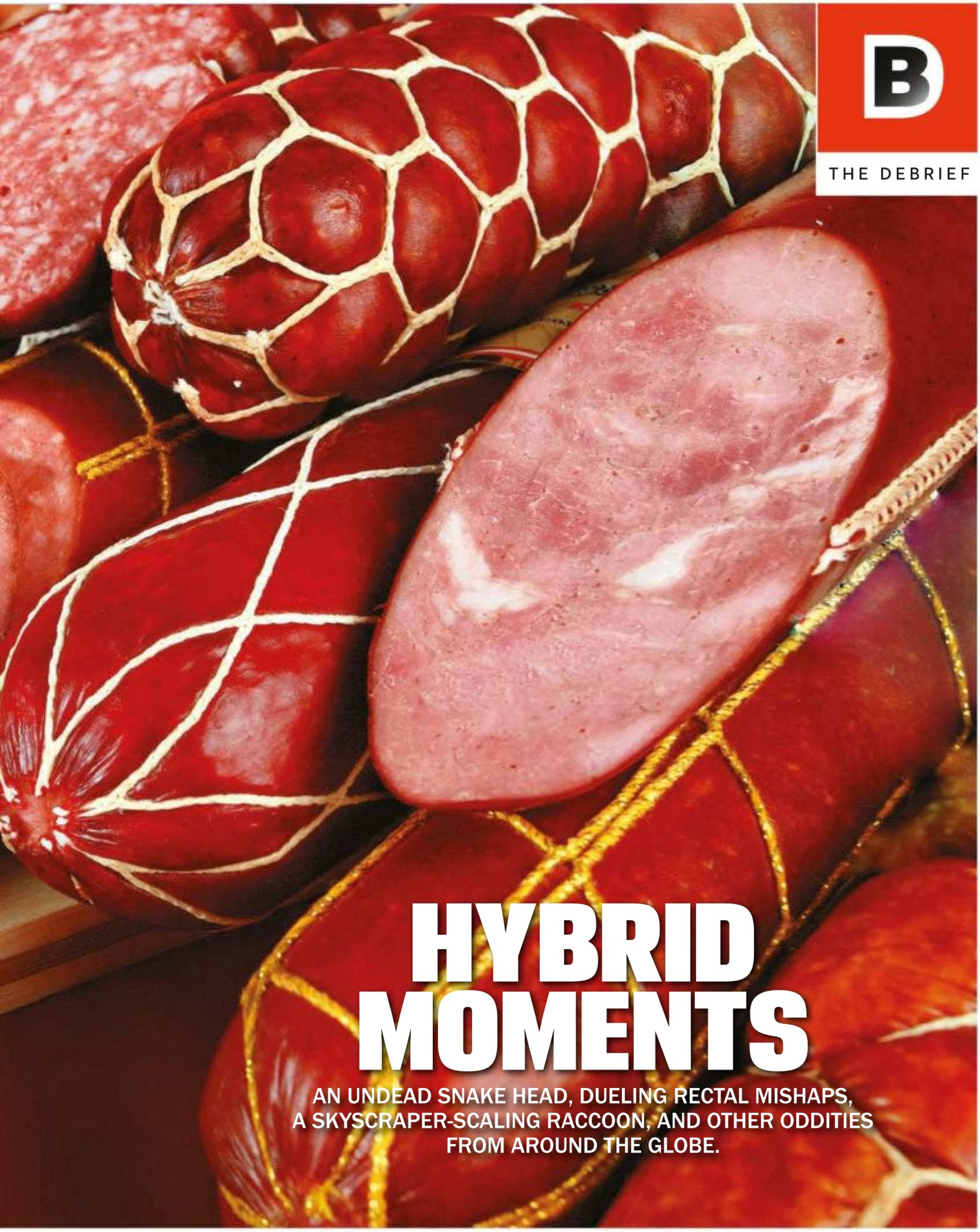
—Anna S., Seattle, Washington

CONTINUED ON PAGE 126

Seeing is believing. When you've had the encounter you've been hoping for, let us know about it! Send your letters to: *Penthouse* magazine, 8944 Mason Avenue, Chatsworth, CA 91311, or email us at letters@penthouse.com.



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THE DEBRIEF

HYBRID MOMENTS

AN UNDEAD SNAKE HEAD, DUELING RECTAL MISHAPS, A SKYSCRAPER-SCALING RACCOON, AND OTHER ODDITIES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE.



HEAD ZOMBIE

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY ALEXANDER WONG

WE here at *Penthouse* care about our readers, so we offer this as a cautionary tale. It concerns venomous snakes and what not to do if you happen upon one. Such snakes, it turns out, become lethally undead after decapitation—still capable of biting with full toxic force for many minutes after the death blow, maybe for as long as an hour.

A Texas man learned this the hard way recently when his wife discovered a four-foot Western diamondback rattler in their yard.

She screamed. He left his lawnmower, grabbed a shovel, and with one clean strike chopped the rattler's head off with the tool's blade. After calming his wife down, he went to dispose of the reptile's remains.

The snake had been "dead" for approximately ten minutes. Without knowing that beheaded rattlers are infinitely more dangerous than headless chickens, Jeremy Sutcliffe, 40, picked up the scaly head. It bit him. It held on for 30 seconds, plenty of time to empty its poison glands into the middle fingers of Sutcliffe's right hand.

He was a goner if he didn't get rapid medical attention. Airlifted to a Corpus Christi hospital, Sutcliffe was in septic shock when he arrived, his blood pressure plummeting. Black blisters covered his hand. Doctors pumped him full of an insane 26 antivenom doses (the average treatment is two to four), and even that wasn't enough. They put him in a medically-induced coma. He woke four days later, with no memory of the snake.

Thanks to his doctors and a helicopter pilot, he's doing better. Sutcliffe joins the estimated 10,000 Americans annually who get bit by snakes (*10,000??*), but avoided contributing to the annual death count, which averages five to seven victims.

How does a beheaded diamondback bite? The secret is how little oxygen its brain needs. Chop a mammal's head off, and that's it. The head of a venomous snake? It becomes a vicious little motherfucking zombie with fangs ready to chomp.

SAUSAGE FEST

ROCK stars are notorious for trashing hotel rooms. There's drummer Keith Moon, who left a trail of thrown food, sprayed fire extinguishers, and broken furniture in a Michigan Holiday Inn during a 1967 tour with his band The Who. Moon also drove a car into the pool. Nirvana's Dave Grohl and Krist Novoselic beat the shit out of rooms in a St. Paul, Minnesota, hotel in 1993, to the tune of $19,000 in damages. And Amy Winehouse? In 2007, she and her husband got in a bloody brawl, leading to a room-cleanup tab exceeding $10K.



Per Google, the British New Wave band Flock of Seagulls never did pricey damage to London's Savoy or any other hotel, but here's the next best thing. Hotel-room-trashing actual seagulls. Yep, back in 2001 Canadian Nick Burchill brought a bunch of pepperoni from his hometown of Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Victoria, British Columbia, planning to give the gift of meat to some old Navy buddies. He checked into the Fairmont Empress. The room was warm and lacked a fridge, so he set the sausage beside a window open to the April air.

Things took a Hitchcockian turn. When Nick went out for a walk, 40 seagulls flew in the window and attacked his sausage. But it gets worse. The pepperoni gave them the runs. And it made them drool. Nick came home to a room full of drooling, shitting seabirds, who went crazy when he entered. Feathers flew. Chunks of pepperoni scattered. The birds knocked pictures off the wall, a lamp off a table. When hotel management got a look at the housekeeping nightmare, they banned Burchill from the premises. Permanently.

Fast-forward to 2018. Still feeling guilty all these years later, Burchill wrote a letter of apology to the hotel. It included an account of the seagull mayhem. He shared the letter on Facebook, where it went viral. Later he flew to Victoria, repeated his apology in person, and gave hotel managers a pound of Brothers TNT Pepperoni as a gift.

They lifted the ban. But we think the Fairmont should capitalize on the publicity and create a Pepperoni Room. Who wouldn't want to spend a night where a bunch of seagulls destroyed multiple sausages and covered the bed and carpet in liquid excrement?

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY MICHAEL C. GRAY



NEARLY every ancient people had a deity associated with fermented grain. A beer god or goddess. Take the Norse, for example. There was Aegir, who brewed ale in a huge iron pot given to him by Thor, and kept the other divinities happy with mugs that filled themselves.

Gods of beer have vanished, unfortunately, like America's Falstaff brewery. But beer heroes still arise, like the two gentlemen below, one of them a Florida man (of course). And beer memes, slogans, and ad concepts still float high in the pop-culture sea, frothing like the head on a well-poured pint of Guinness stout. (*Guinness Makes You Strong.*)

Case in point: Bud Light's "dilly, dilly" caught on so fully this past year that it made a list of banned verbiage at the 2018 Masters golf tournament. Shout the catchphrase from the gallery even once and security would escort you from Augusta National.

But let's meet our heroes. First up, carpenter Randy Colpek from Santa Cruz, California, who loves Costco's cheapass Kirkland Signature Light so much that he made his own video ad. Click to watch Colpek—who says he drinks 18 cans of the bargain beer daily—crash through a wall of empty Kirkland Signature beer cases ala the Kool-Aid Man. He also recites slogans. *Kirkland Light: Available in 48-packs where you buy your pants!* is one. Here's another: *Kirkland Light: Got a drinking problem? Now you got a drinking solution!*

"To be honest all cheap beer is pretty much the same," Colpek told the Huffington Post. "I always get the cashier saying, 'Looks like someone is having a party,' but Costco cut down on that shame." The enthusiast added, "I don't pick up my tools without a beer."

Meanwhile, down in the Florida Keys, Daryl Royal Riedel, 48, got pulled over by a sheriff's deputy in June. When he exited his pickup he was lovingly clutching a can of Busch beer. Then, as if filled with the spirit of Aegir himself, Riedel proceeded to pound the beverage in front of the deputy. Why waste good beer? With three prior DUI convictions, he knew he was going to the pokey, so he figured he deserved one for the road.

Something tells us Randy and Daryl would get along.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY IGOR KLIMOV



HIPPOCRATIC DOPE

IN a sick twist on the expression "cutting a rug," Atlanta dermatologist Dr. Windell Davis-Boutte, head of her own contour surgery and skin clinic, got in the habit of dancing to hip-hop while performing surgery–part of what led Georgia to suspend her medical license in June. How do we know she boogied in the OR? *Because she made fucking YouTube videos.*

Violating numerous elements of medicine's Hippocratic Oath, which emphasizes respect for patient dignity and privacy, Davis-Boutte ("DOCTOR TO THE STARS!" according to her website) is facing lawsuits from nine former patients, with more to come, since roughly 100 people have filed complaints against the crunking derm.

The suits highlight cosmetic disfigurement and hideous fuckups, like the patient who simply wanted liposuction and ended up with brain damage. One of the grosser cases involves a New Orleans hairdresser, Latoyah Rideau, who flew to Atlanta hoping for a "butt a little rounder and smaller," and was left with lopsided, continually itching ass cheeks.

Ms. Rideau features in one of the videos, lying facedown on the operating table while Davis-Boutte slices open her backside while shimmying to "Cut It" by O. T. Genasis.

The demented doc "fingers rolls of skin and jiggles them to the beat," mugging for the camera, reports the *New York Times*. Later, during surgery, she rhythmically cuts into flesh and pauses to "wave the scalpel at the camera, the music continuing to play."

Is a license suspension and endless litigation enough punishment for this whack-job medical narcissist? How about a year cleaning toilets at a series of Georgia highway rest stops while dressed in an orange jumpsuit? Maybe Davis-Boutte can launch a second career as the Dancing Toilet-Scrubber. Though that might be a tough sell on YouTube.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY B-D-S PIOTR MARCINSKI

SUITE JUSTICE

GRANTED, it's no fun when you're in love and the object of your affections decides to chase a dream that will take them away from you. But a normal person doesn't try to sabotage that dream. A normal person might even support it, wanting the loved one to be happy.

That's not what happened in the strange case of the Canadian clarinetist.

In 2014, music student Eric Abramovitz, then 20, was accepted into one of the world's top conservatories, the Colburn in Los Angeles. There he would study with Yehuda Gilad, an elite clarinet professor who only takes on two new, lucky students a year. The acceptance came with a full scholarship, meaning the school would cover Abramovitz's tuition, room and board, and living expenses. It's a hard-core clarinet student's dream.

But Abramovitz never knew he'd been accepted.

His flutist girlfriend at the time, a fellow student at Montreal's McGill University, engineered an elaborate deception to keep Abramovitz in town. She knew his email password and deleted the acceptance email before he saw it. Then she used his account to send a letter to the Colburn, saying he could not accept the school's wonderful offer, having decided to study music elsewhere. Finally, she created a fake Gilad email account, wrote a fake rejection letter, and sent it to Abramovitz.

He was crushed. To study with Gilad was his greatest desire. Naturally his girlfriend was soooooo sorry it didn't work out, spending days and nights consoling Abramovitz.

Dream dashed, he stayed at McGill and graduated two years later. He reapplied to Colburn. And after showing up to audition before Gilad for a second time in three years, the professor asked the obvious question: "Why'd you turn us down in 2014, Eric?"

"What do you mean, turned you down?" responded the baffled clarinetist.

Realizing he was the victim of a scheme, he first suspected a "computer-savvy clarinetist," he told the *Washington Post*. But then one of his friends mentioned the McGill flutist, a woman he'd broken up with the previous year. Finding the bogus rejection email, he tested the Gmail account with his ex-girlfriend's Facebook password, which he knew. Bingo. She'd reused it. The fake rejection letter sat alone in the Sent archive.

Things are looking up for Abramovitz. He went on to study with Gilad after all, while a graduate student at USC. Today he plays clarinet in the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. And a judge just awarded him the equivalent of $250,000 in his lawsuit against his ex, a ruling that acknowledged the missed Colburn scholarship and delayed career.



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY POOMPOB ANANTARAK

WHOOPS!



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / TERO VESALAINEN

SOMETIMES weird shit happens to good people.

Just ask the 26-year-old man in India who ended up with a six-inch shower head in his butt.

In late May, the poor guy was just trying to have a relaxing shower when he "slipped and fell." Next thing he knew—*yowza!* Luckily he was able to disconnect the shower head's PVC pipe from the wall and get his sorry ass to a hospital.

Doctors at the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital and Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research in New Delhi were dubious of his claim that it was a fall, however, as one Dr. Peeyush Kumar wrote in his case report: "Though the patient reported accidental insertion of the shower head and denied voluntary insertion, there is a high suspicion of voluntary insertion for auto-erotic purpose."

Medics used general anesthesia and "gentle anal stretching" to remove the shower head, and after determining there were no internal injuries, they offered the man psychiatric help. Of course he refused. Why would he need it? It was an *accident,* goddamnit!

According to Dr. Kumar's report, two-thirds of patients who get things stuck in their keisters for "erotic purposes" are men in their 30s and 40s. "A large variety of objects have been reported," he wrote, "including bottles, cans, glass bulbs, stones, small rods, fruits and vegetables, vibrators, dildos, and toys."

Sadly, Shower Head Man was only able to bask in the international spotlight for a few days before a 50-year-old man in China stole his rectal thunder with an impacted foot-long eggplant.

According to Kan Kan News, a Chinese news outlet we've never heard of, doctors dislodged the massive eggplant from the man's intestines after he used it in hopes of expanding his colon and relieving his constipation.

Unfortunately, he pushed it in a little too far and it disappeared inside his body. He suffered through two long days of severe abdominal pain and vomiting before seeking medical help.

CT scans show a large oval object lodged at an angle inside the man's abdomen. Doctors were able to retrieve the eggplant whole, intact and ready to be cooked with garlic sauce. The man had to remain at the hospital, however—the shiny purple fruit (yes, it's a fruit!) had traveled so far up his body that it ruptured his bowel and inflamed his lungs.

Next time, might we recommend some relaxing Smooth Move tea*? The herbal drink has a not-unpleasant taste, and it works like a charm the next morning!

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ROCKIN' RACOON

AS if we needed further testament to how much animals rule, check out the scrappy little raccoon who scaled the 25-story USB Tower in St. Paul, Minnesota.

It all began the morning of June 13, when three maintenance workers at the downtown skyscraper spotted the female raccoon curled up on a ledge 20 feet above the street. They kindly offered a makeshift ladder so she could climb down to freedom.

But no, the wily ingrate ran the other direction, then dug her claws into the building's mottled stone facade and started to climb.

As an audience watched from the sidewalks, as well as from inside the building, the raccoon scaled five stories within minutes. A marquee on Minnesota Public Radio's building across the street flashed the news: "St. Paul's downtown raccoon reaches new heights."

(Do yourself a favor and watch the footage KARE 11 News reporter Alicia Lewis posted of the raccoon climbing to the *Mission Impossible* theme. It might help you forget the impacted eggplant story.)

By lunchtime, the raccoon had covered 13 stories. By midafternoon, she was seen resting on the 22nd floor. Meanwhile, social media users everywhere went berserk over the unfolding drama, with updates and suggestions for how to rescue the raccoon. One doofus even attempted to fly a drone toward her, but was thwarted by wind.

Finally, at 2:45 A.M., the badass raccoon summited the roof, where she was rewarded with a tasty bowl of cat food, which had been placed inside a trap set by wildlife officials.

Wildlife Management Services retrieved the raccoon later that morning, reporting that she was "incredibly tired." At lunchtime, an announcement was made on Facebook that she'd been taken to an "undisclosed location," with a video of her happy release.

Now try to remember all the good will you feel for this critter the next time you see one skulking by your house at midnight, a dirty diaper in its mouth.

As one Twitterer warned: "Do not be fooled by their attempts to be cute. This building-climbing scheme was just part of their nefarious plot to take over the world. Stay vigilant!"

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY SONSEDSKA YULII

TRUTH AFTER DEATH

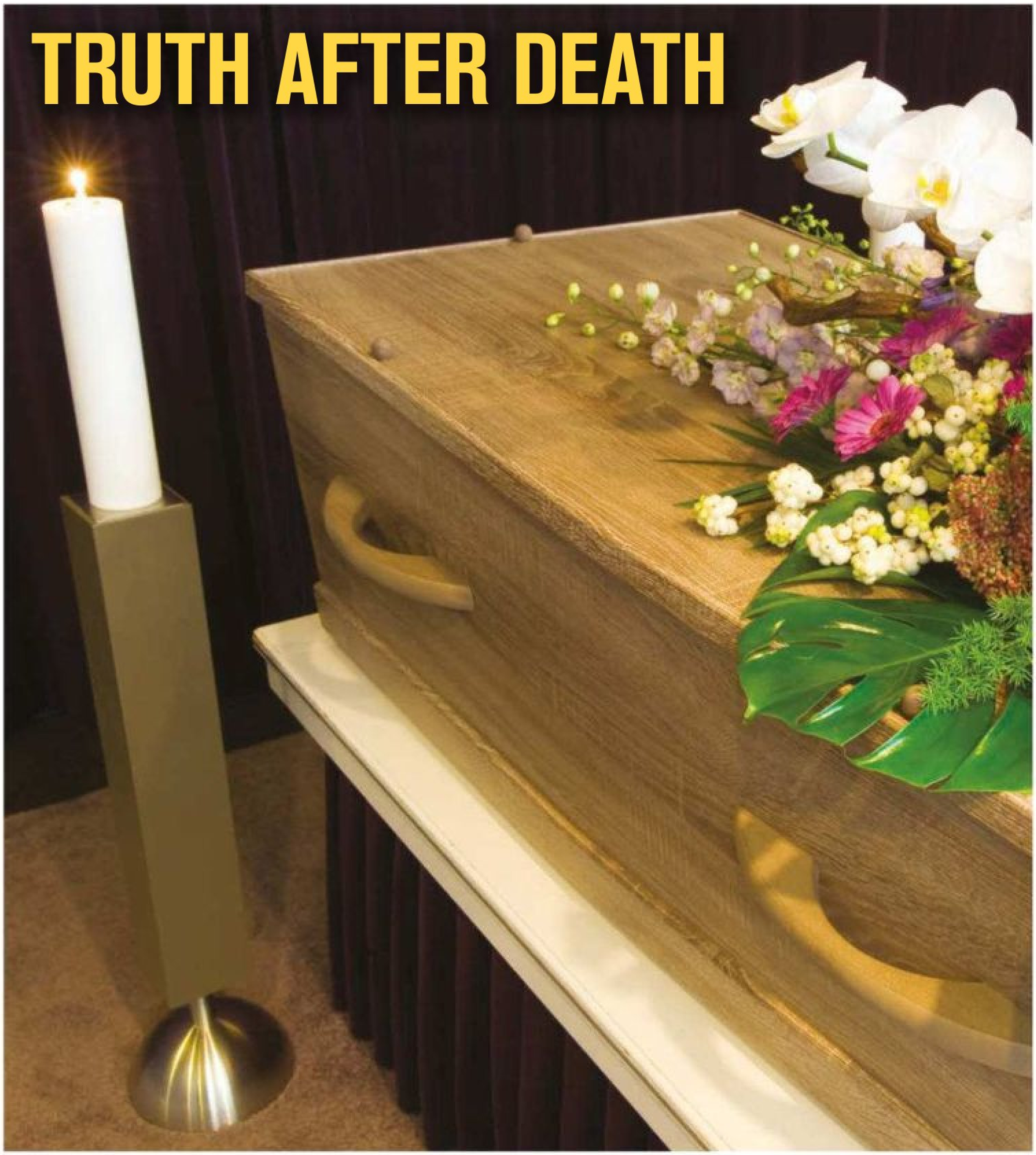


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY ROBERT HOETINK

WHILE lady raccoons were scaling skyscrapers in St. Paul, Minnesota, a dead woman in the neighboring town of Springfield was just starting out on her long journey to hell.

After 80-year-old Kathleen Dehmlow died on May 31, her two children did the respectable thing by submitting her obituary to the local newspaper, the *Redwood Falls Gazette*.

The June 5 obituary begins with the date of Dehmlow's birth, in 1938, her marriage to husband Dennis, in 1957, and the blessed birth of their two children. The corresponding photo shows a sweet-looking old lady who may or may not have been in the middle of eating something.

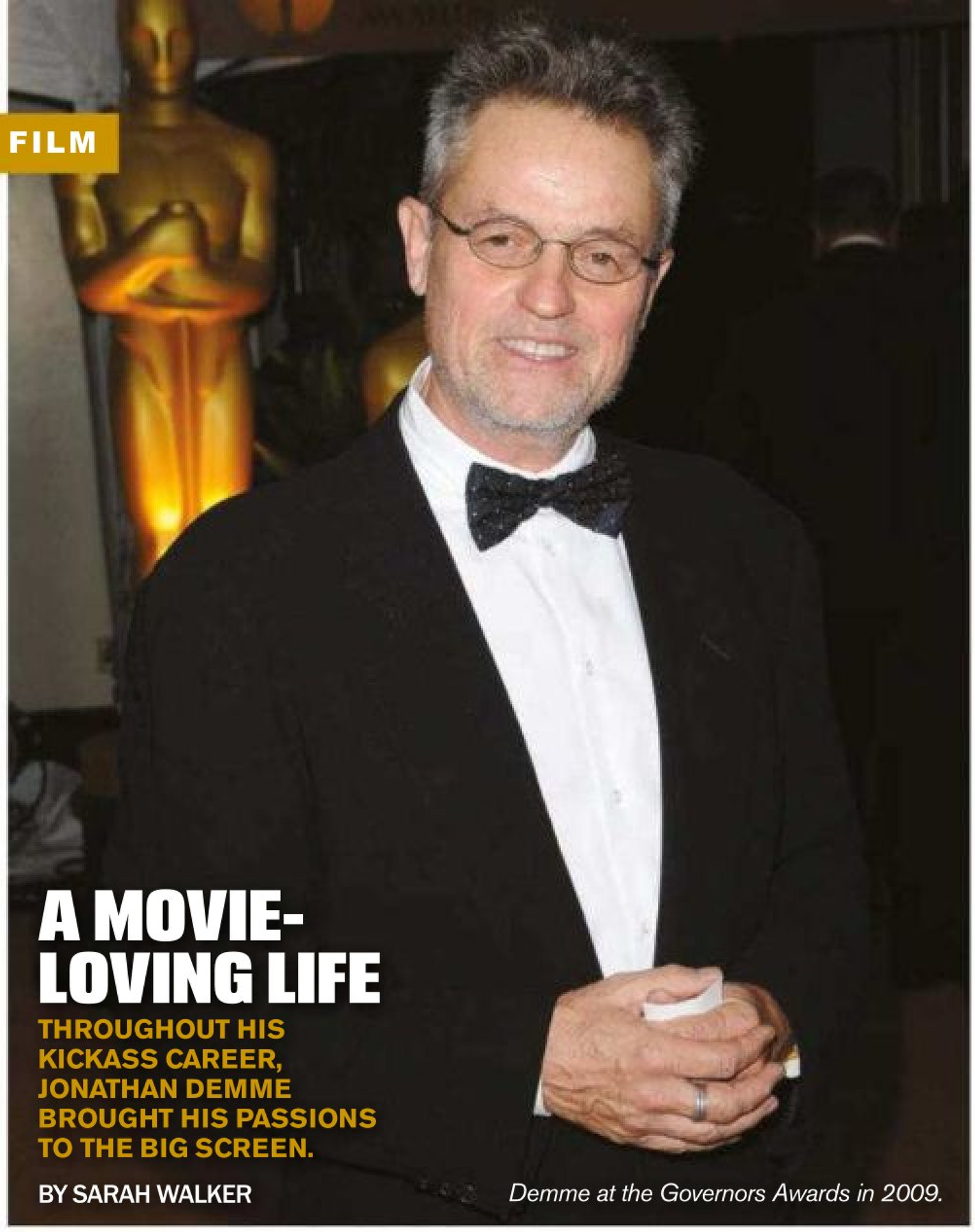
Then, according to the obit, Dehmlow's life hit a dramatic bump:

"In 1962 she became pregnant by her husband's brother Lyle Dehmlow and moved to California. She abandoned her children, Gina and Jay, who were then raised by her parents in Clements, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Schunk."

The obit concludes that Dehmlow "will now face judgement [sic]" and "will not be missed by Gina and Jay, and they understand that this world is a better place without her."

We're guessing that life in the Schunk house was not all peaches and cream. But not everyone was so sympathetic. Following the obituary's publication, people with nothing better to do got pissy about "respect for the dead" and responsible journalism and all that. It was removed from the *Gazette* the next day.

Gina and Jay could not be reached for comment, but we're not worried. They were probably just busy partying down.



A MOVIE-LOVING LIFE

THROUGHOUT HIS KICKASS CAREER, JONATHAN DEMME BROUGHT HIS PASSIONS TO THE BIG SCREEN.

BY SARAH WALKER

Demme at the Governors Awards in 2009.

IN his 1992 Oscar acceptance speech for *The Silence of the Lambs,* director Jonathan Demme acknowledged his "movie-loving life," then proceeded to thank half the people in it. To anyone who ever worked with this gregarious, prolific filmmaker, this big-hearted tribute came as no surprise. Demme was all about collaboration.

The director's interests and talents were wide-ranging, as was his body of work—features, documentaries, TV, performance films. And his enthusiasm for his subject matter was always palpable, especially in his smaller films. Demme had an uncanny knack for bringing together the very best people—actors, writers, art directors, musicians—and he often went overboard in sharing credit. But it was all part of what made his films so great, and why he was so beloved. For him, every project was a passion project.

Demme died of esophageal cancer in 2017, at age 73, and the film world still mourns his loss. Even though we'll never know all the brilliant work that awaited, we can still tap into his rich and generous legacy. Lucky us!

STOP MAKING SENSE (1984)

Demme saw the Talking Heads in the early eighties, and said he was blown away by "this movie just waiting to be filmed." He tracked down David Byrne, toured with the band for about a week, and then filmed them over four nights at the Pantages Theater in Hollywood. It was December 1983, and the Heads were at their prime, having just released the now-classic album *Speaking in Tongues.*

This is the first of several music films by Demme—he later shot performances by Neil Young, the Pretenders, Robyn Hitchcock, and Justin Timberlake—but this one's his most iconic. It's a visceral, visually gorgeous masterpiece (the cinematographer, Jordan Cronenweth, had just finished *Blade Runner*), and it's pure joy. As Demme told *Time,* "I love this movie passionately with all my heart."

SOMETHING WILD (1986)

Ask any true film nerd and they'll tell you how much they love this movie. Critics heaped it with praise, but it barely registered with audiences when it was released.

Jeff Daniels plays Charlie, a nerdy, repressed accountant, and Melanie Griffith is Lulu, an alcoholic wildcat who kidnaps him in her '67 Pontiac convertible and takes him to her high school reunion. It's a bizarre, unpredictable story (Demme called it a "schizophrenic…screwball comedy that turns into a film noir") loaded with vividly drawn characters, great music (by X, Big Audio Dynamite, New Order, and a live performance by the Feelies, one of Demme's favorite bands), and fantastic costumes and production design. Added bonus: a young, crazy Ray Liotta in his first movie role.

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS (1991)

We'd be remiss in not mentioning the film Demme is best known for, and which won a whopping five Academy Awards.

Yeah, we know, everyone on the planet has seen this movie, and for good reason—it's perfect. This was Demme's big leap from quirky medium-budget indies to Hollywood blockbusters, and, apropos of the subject matter, his style is more serious. But in the film's most notorious scene—Buffalo Bill (Ted Levine) shimmying to Q Lazzarus's "Goodbye Horses," barely dressed in drag, his junk tucked between his legs—we get a quick blast of cool, classic Demme: his taste in music, flamboyant costumes, bohemian art direction. (Some trivia for ya'll: Levine said he was so nervous about shooting this scene he did a couple shots of tequila beforehand.)

RACHEL GETTING MARRIED (2008)

This movie gave us a whole new respect for Anne Hathaway, who's fantastic as Kim, an addict who's released from rehab to attend her sister's wedding. Demme made a big stylistic shift here, blending his well-honed documentary skills with narrative storytelling, shooting many of the scenes unrehearsed using a handheld camera. The result is a vibrant, nuanced, and shatteringly personal family drama—for which the director (naturally) credited veteran cinematographer Declan Quinn, brother of actor Aidan.

As it was with all of Demme's films, this one's a near-perfect symphony of casting, acting, music, production design, writing, and, of course, directing. And rather than hiring extras for the final wedding scene, the director called on a lifetime of friendships and collaborators to fill in as guests, including Fab 5 Freddy, Robyn Hitchcock, and Roger Corman, an early mentor. Shortly after premiering it at the Venice Film Festival, Demme claimed to love this movie more than any other he'd made. We agree.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / BY S_BUKLEY

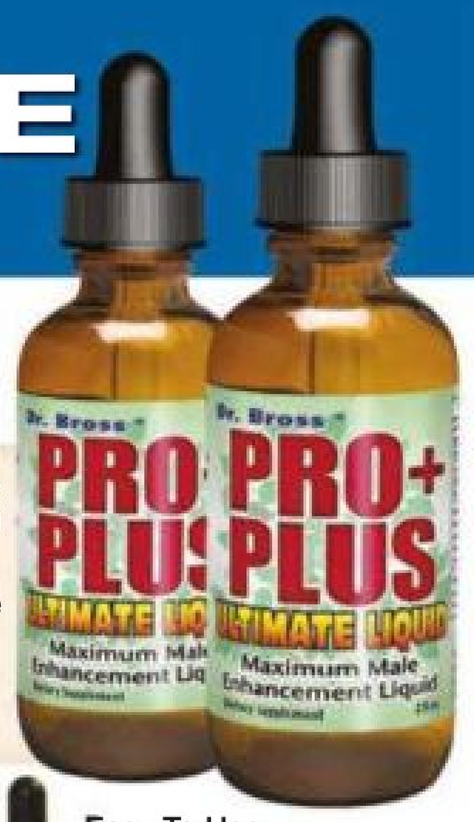
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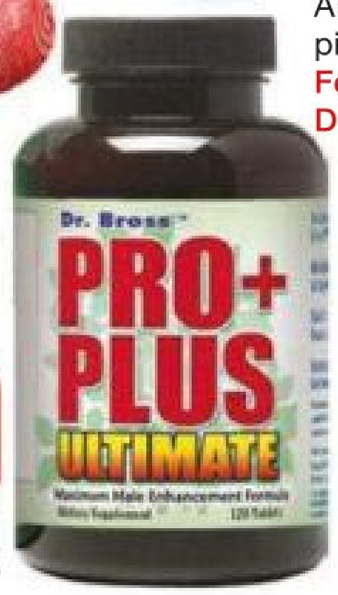
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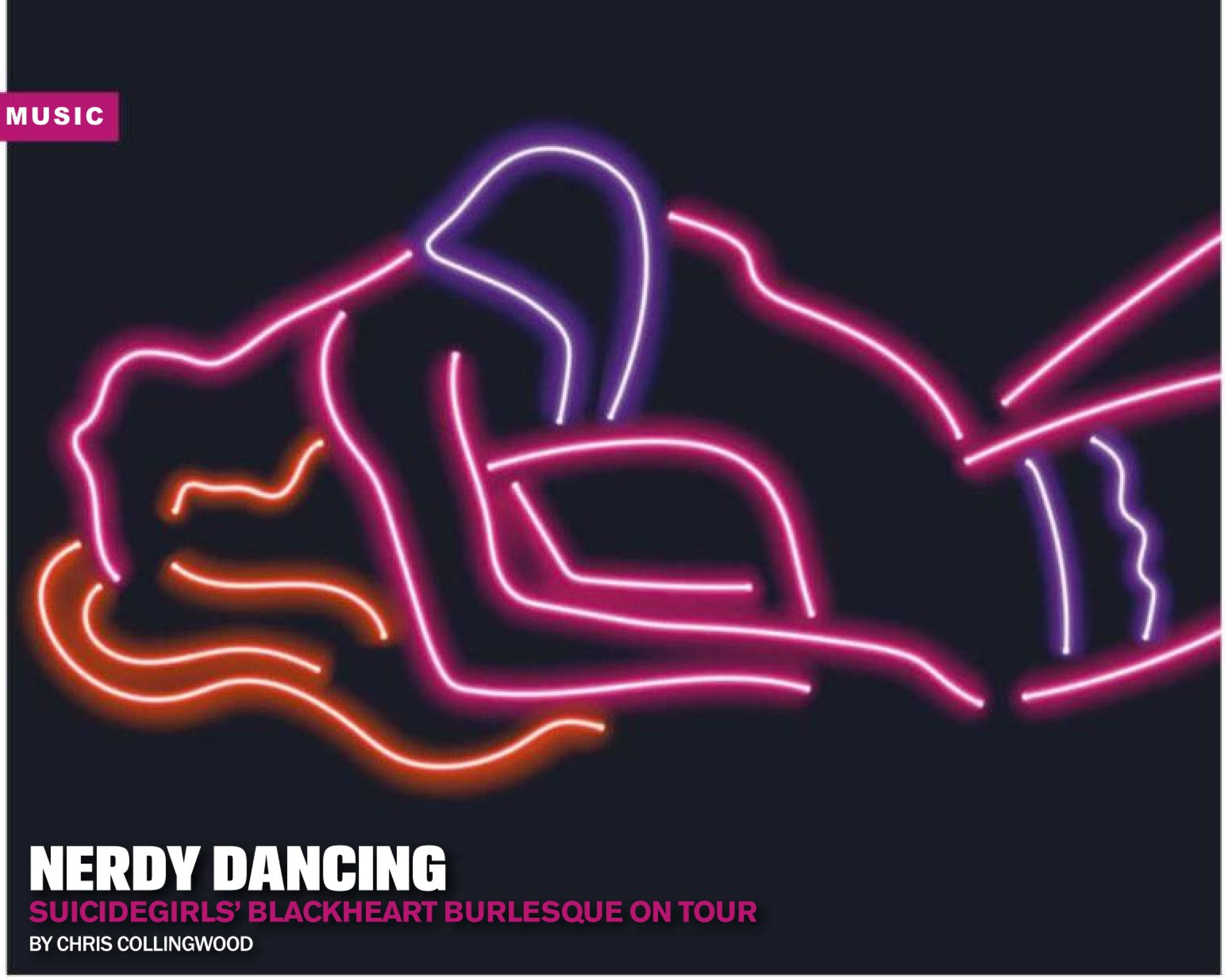
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NERDY DANCING

SUICIDEGIRLS' BLACKHEART BURLESQUE ON TOUR

BY CHRIS COLLINGWOOD

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / BY ANNA_WIZARD

NOT wanting to appear stupid, I did a little (just a little) research for this piece, and was surprised to learn that "burlesque" as it was originally conceived had nothing to do with seminude women. The word described a type of literature—and later theater—that would today not incorrectly be called "satire" or "parody." Burlesque plays that mocked the Victorian era's prudishness were wildly popular in nineteenth-century London, and soon after there were similar revues in New York City and other metropolitan centers in the United States.

Erotic dancing didn't really become part of the show until the early twentieth century, when it dawned on some industrious chap that every drunken rager is better with nudity. Burlesque had a rollicking heyday in America until the onset of Prohibition in the twenties and the concurrent rapid proliferation of movie theaters, and by the 1940s the age of burlesque was over.

Various attempts to revive its spirit have paid homage to the form, and more or less succeeded in the same way it's fun to ride one of those bicycles with a giant front tire or hand-churn your own butter. *People used to do this?*

Enter SuicideGirls, alterna-vixens of the internet whose tattooed reimagining of the genre hits the road somewhere near you this summer. Their touring show, Blackheart Burlesque, aims to do for the old song and shimmy what the massive SuicideGirls web community did for pin-up girls. "We put a modern twist on the classic pin-up picture," cofounder Missy Suicide tells me. "We wanted to create an updated version of the burlesque. It's fun, it's sexy, it's silly."

Inspiration for the act comes from every nerdy movie, TV show, comic book, or videogame you can think of—*Star Wars* (duh), *Star Trek* (duh, I guess), *Stranger Things, Game of Thrones, Westworld, Lara Croft,* even *Rick and Morty*. If you've ever wanted to be mock-seduced by a Stormtrooper or a futuristic cowgirl robot with a feather boa, Blackheart Burlesque is definitely for you.

"We have an ongoing list of pop culture references," Missy explains. Every SuicideGirl can add to the list, and when it's time to put the show together, Missy and head choreographer Liryc Suicide draw from it to create routines.

The soundtrack to this extravagant geek fest, when not directly lifted from the source material, is diverse and engaging. "I'm a huge music fan from back in the day," Missy says. "Finding the songs that match up, that you wouldn't necessarily think go, but go so well—that's where I nerd out."

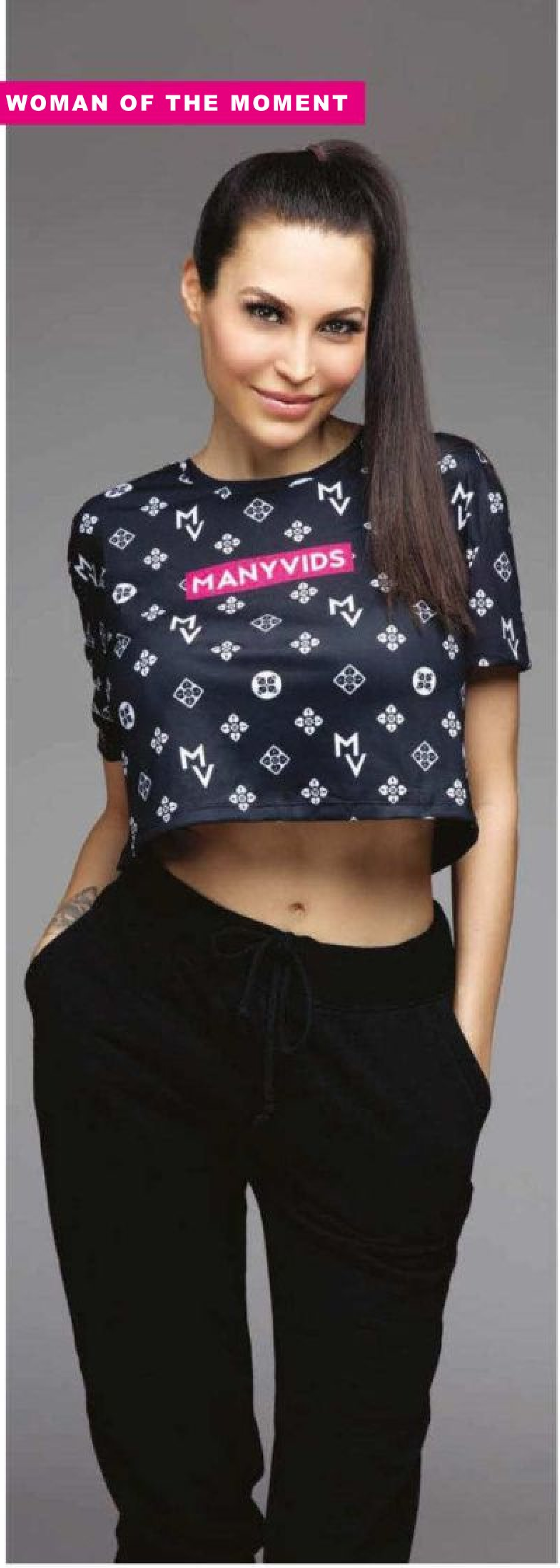
Her selections include Gen X classics like the Pixies' "Wave of Mutilation" alongside songs by indie darling Grimes and not-so-indie but nonetheless darling Lana Del Rey. Some of the dancers also rap and sing, and the emphasis on audience participation means the show is different every night.

"When you're in the audience, the energy in the space is palpable," Missy says. "The girls are so confident and comfortable and happy. They just create such a good vibe and the audience members feed back and it's this giant circle of happiness. It's impossible to leave without a smile on your face."

Beats churning butter at a replica pioneer village any day.

Chris Collingwood is a singer, songwriter, and cofounder of the rock group Fountains of Wayne. His new band, Look Park, released their eponymous debut in 2016. Follow him @lookpark


SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO STOP AND SMELL THE BUTTHOLES
Todd Francis



MANYVIDS CEO BELLA FRENCH

INTERVIEW BY JANET JOHNSON

IN four short years, Montreal-based adult technology platform ManyVids has risen from an idea to the top adult clip site in the world. But CEO and occasional camgirl Bella French had full confidence in her vision. After all, it was an excellent concept: create a platform where any camgirl can host her own content, and make it a hub for the sexiest women in the world. Today, ManyVids is a multinational pro-sex technology conglomerate that specializes in live-streaming, e-commerce, and video-hosting.

"We are first and foremost a tech firm," French says of the company she now runs with her cofounder tech pros, Sed Dehan and Gino Sciretta. "We want adult performers to have the best tools for success."

French no longer cams as much as she used to; her main focus is running the company. Since her days as a buxom blonde bombshell, she has reduced her breasts and gone back to her natural hair color. In other words, she's returned to herself.

Aside from overseeing a cutting-edge digital platform, French is devoted to advocating for sex workers, which is why this year she revealed herself as the company's cofounder and CEO in the documentary *We Are Many*. One of her latest projects? A 1-800 hotline for adult entertainers to call when they need help.

Following a shocking string of suicides last year by prominent women in the adult industry, French was compelled to do something. After shutting herself in her office to cry silently, she returned to her 80-plus employees to brainstorm a solution. The hotline was born.

"It's one of my proudest accomplishments," she says in her charming accent. "I care about the models. They are our business partners and we want them to be treated with respect."

We sat down with the savvy French Canadian to talk business, entrepreneurs, busting ass, obstacles, and boobs.

You're the CEO of a major technology company. Why keep this awesome title a secret until now?

There were a few reasons why I waited. First of all, I'm a workaholic. I love to work, and I had no interest in putting myself out there publicly because that would take up a lot of my time when I wanted to be working on the platform. Secondly, I didn't want attention taken away from the company and put on me instead. I knew that if I was out there, then my history as a camgirl would bring too much attention. I wanted the focus to be on ManyVids. As we evolved, it became harder and harder to do business hiding myself. I realized that unless I put myself out there, I could not advocate for the changes I want to see in the adult industry. I'm really passionate about that stuff, and I couldn't do that hiding behind the computer.

You had a sizable following when you were camming, right?
Yes. I started camming in the fall of 2012 and I did it pretty seriously for three years. When I started ManyVids, I had to cam less to focus on the company. However, now that I'm public I am camming a bit again.

How did your company begin?
Before creating ManyVids, I went to business school and then I opened two of my own clothing stores. I was born an entrepreneur. I love building projects. At one point, while camming, I decided I needed my own website. With the help of my boyfriend Sed Dehan, I created bellafrench.com. We barely invested any money in it. It was ghetto. But it still did really well. It gave me the idea to create a larger platform that could host lots of mini websites within it. We knew it was going to work because we had the proof of concept! That's how the idea started. We knew that there was a lot of potential in the cam world. So, I cammed and saved money, while Sed worked on code with his friend and our third partner, Gino Sciretta. I wanted to have the most cutting-edge platform for camgirls to succeed on. I'd heard too many stories of webmasters and coders who would try to get money out of camgirls to build them websites. It happened to me!

Wait, coders would try to take advantage of camgirls by offering them sites, like weird, online pimps?
When I was camming, I had a guy message me, bragging about the amazing websites he was building for various models, including Coco Austin, and he asked me to get on Skype to talk it over. I agreed, because I was curious. But basically, what he was trying to do was sell me a templated website, which is the easiest website to do, for $6,000. No thank you! Other models told me similar stories.

There are creeps everywhere. We can't avoid them!
It's so bad! I actually think there is a huge misconception about adult performers, and the assumption is that we are all ditzy, dumb girls. It's simply not true. Camgirls are sex entrepreneurs capitalizing on their charm and beauty. They're monetizing the fact that men worship female sexuality. They offer the girlfriend experience from the comfort of their apartments. Genius!

How did you get into camming in the first place?
There was a big flood in my Montreal clothing store. The water tank in the apartment above had broken and flooded my business. The tank was connected to city water, so it just kept filling up and pouring water into the store. I lost $250,000 investing in that store. It was brutal. My insurance wouldn't cover more than $50,000. I had borrowed money from all sorts of places to start the store, but more importantly, my father lent me money and I swore to him that I would pay him back every dollar. I was not going to break that promise by declaring bankruptcy. I was never too interested in the adult industry, but I knew Gino's girlfriend made a lot of money camming. I started doing research. My first reaction was shock. I was never going to do that!

You were a prude!
Yes, like a lot of people, I had a misconception about what the industry was. Two weeks later, I caved and just decided to do it to pay back my debts. My plan was to get out the minute I had enough money. But then I got hooked. I ended up loving the cam world.

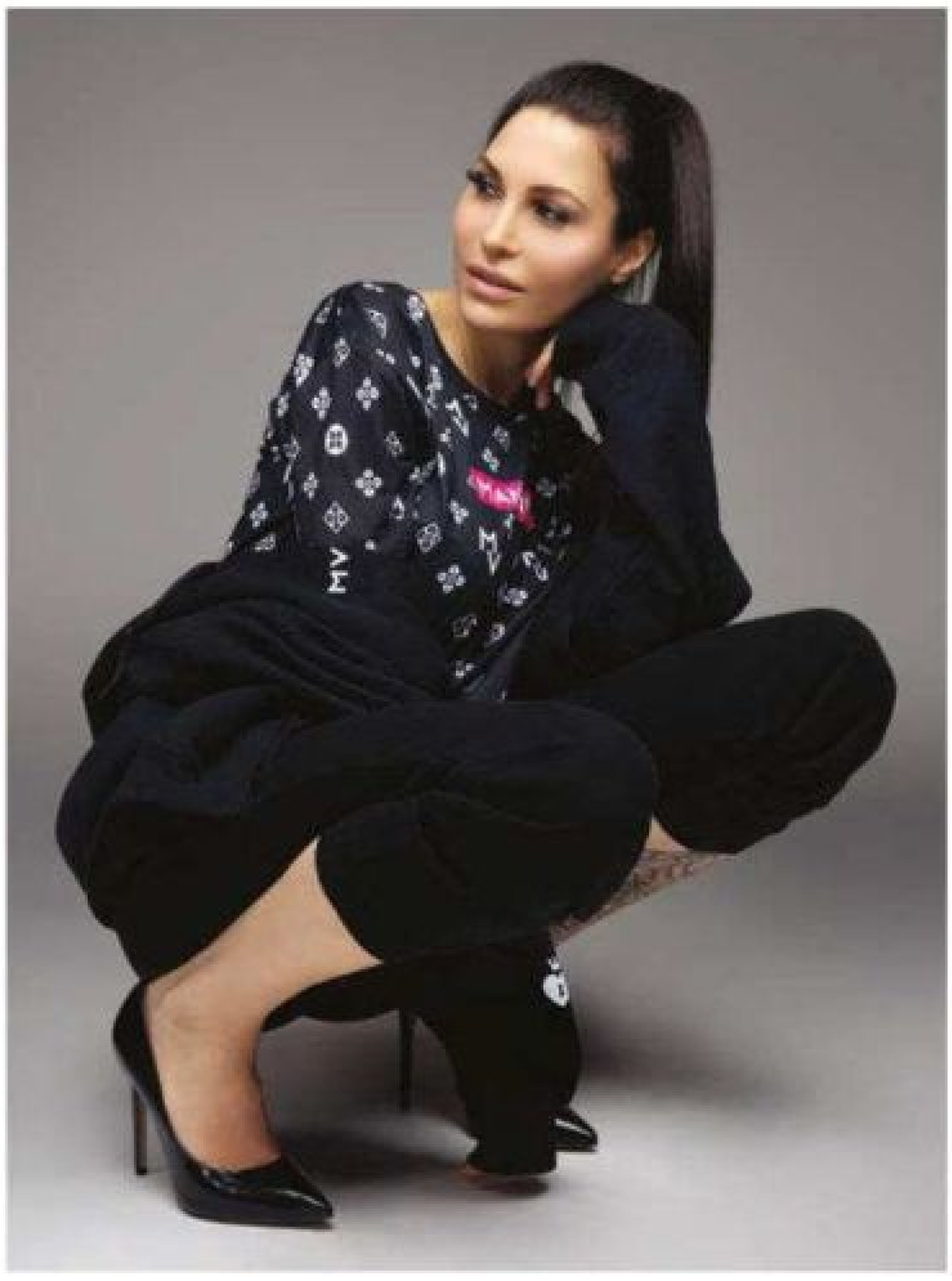
Did you pay off all the debt?
Yes! It took me close to three years, but I was also paying for my life and getting a lot of plastic surgery then.

Yeah, you used to have massive boobs. That blonde bombshell look. Why the physical changes?
I always thought Ice-T's wife Coco Austin was incredible, even before I started camming. I got more surgery as I was camming, but before then I had dyed my brown hair blonde and enhanced my breasts to get that Coco look.

I met Coco Austin when my band was playing with Body Count. Her ass is crazy in real life and her hair cascaded down her back like an upside-down vanilla ice-cream cone.
My fans loved the big boobs. At their biggest, my boobs were 1,200cc implants, but now I have reduced them to 800cc. It's like I was a different person, as though my sexualized side amplified into one human being. I had so much fun being that character.

I can't imagine having boobs that huge!
In your everyday life it gets a bit much. You get so much attention. I love sports, especially running. Even now when I go to jog, I have to wear two sports bras and Band-Aids on my nipples. People don't realize what a big commitment it is to have huge boobs.

And we thank you for your dedication.



Janet Johnson is a writer and editor based in Los Angeles. She is too chicken to become a camgirl.



JORDAN FINLAYSON

We asked Jordan what her favorite thing about autumn is, but she tells us she's more of a summer girl. She escapes to Ibiza as soon as the weather changes to dance in front of thousands in the clubs scattered along the beachfront. Not a bad way to spend the colder months.
@jordan_finlayson

PHOTO CREDIT: COLEMANPHOTO

VICTORIA *By Chulaface*





IDOL WORSHIP:
SHADOW OF THE TOMB RAIDER
Square Enix (Xbox One, PS4, PC)

IF you only associate Lara Croft with short shorts and a physics-defying chest, then you haven't played one of her games since the *Tomb Raider* franchise got a reboot in 2013. The series' titular star shrank in bra size and grew as a character, becoming the ultimate off-the-grid survivor. That game marooned teenage Croft on an island with the sole goal of staying alive rather than slaying Eurothugs or snatching relics. The 2015 sequel, *Rise of the Tomb Raider,* restored a crucial element lost in the reboot's woods: tombs worth raiding. Now, *Shadow of the Tomb Raider* completes the so-called "survivor trilogy" by mixing Croft's Bear Grylls-style wilderness skills with an epic quest for ancient doodads.

In this game's jungles and tombs, we see Lara demonstrating everything she learned as an alumnus of her last two adventures. She spelunks sprawling caverns and explores hidden cities crammed with traps and puzzles that require actual cunning rather than random item collection. You have more control than ever—the best in the series—over Lara's shimmying, leaping, and rope-swinging abilities, to the point where exploring actually feels thrilling and even dangerous. In between the raiding parties, she's free to explore vibrant villages or go all "snake eater" in the wilderness, taking out thugs with sneak-and-strike guerrilla tactics that have become the new normal for this series.

But just as her assassin abilities peak, Lara realizes she still has some growing up to do. Deep in a Mexican Mayan tomb, she recovers an artifact with doomsday potential. Suddenly, Lara learns that her freewheeling approach to relic-hunting—grab the artifacts before the bad guys do—might unleash an actual apocalypse. It's an intriguing twist in this trilogy's charting of Croft's formative years, and a strong sign that her days of minishorts and imperialist tomb raiding are dead and buried.

POWER FAILURE: SHARPEN YOUR WITS—AND YOUR STICKS—IN THESE LAWLESS WORLDS

> 4 <

METRO EXODUS
(DEEP SILVER, XBOX ONE, PS4, PC)

Good luck eking out a living in *Metro Exodus*'s radioactive wasteland, where you'll find no phones, lights, or Instagram, and no remaining limbs if you're not careful. Wield homemade weapons and skulk through ruins crawling with mutants in this nightmarish trek through postapocalyptic Moscow.



> 3 <

RED DEAD REDEMPTION
(ROCKSTAR GAMES, XBOX 360, PS3)

Survive off the grid at your home on the range in this lead-slinging homage to spaghetti westerns. Filled with steamboat shootouts, stage-coach robberies, and showdowns at high noon, it's the best Wild West game you can play until the sequel launches in October.



> 2 <

SUBNAUTICA
(UNKNOWN WORLDS ENTERTAINMENT, XBOX ONE, PC)

Like a videogame version of the movie *Cast Away* but with a sci-fi twist, *Subnautica* ditches players in a tropical sea on a distant planet. Scour coral reefs and deep-ocean vents for food, water, and materials to repair your ship while trying to stay free of the alien fauna's food chain.

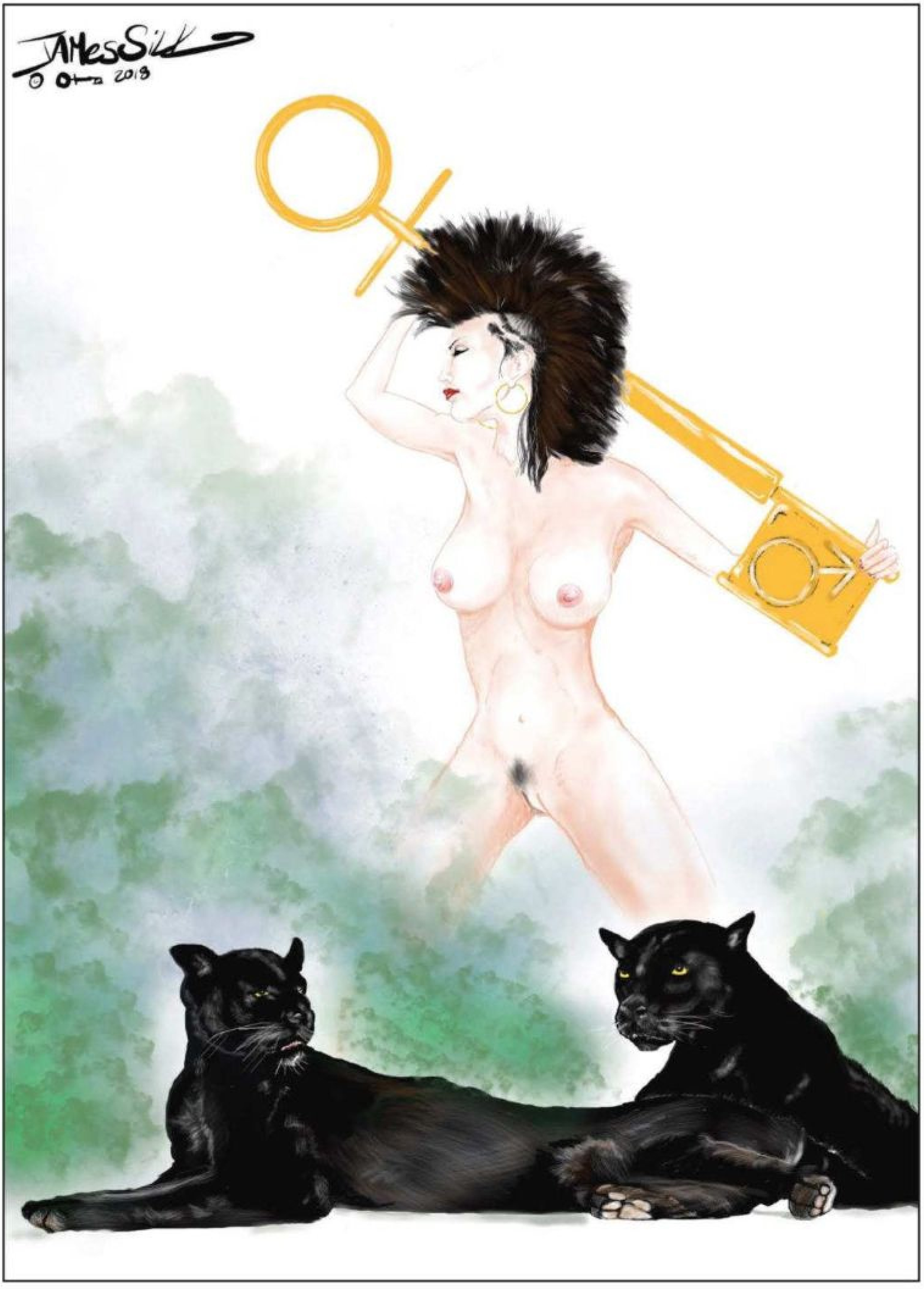


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STATE OF DECAY 2
(MICROSOFT STUDIOS, XBOX ONE, PC)

GTA meets *The Walking Dead* in this wide-open adventure set in a zombie-infested world. Build a base with up to three pals and embark on raiding missions while managing limited resources and your own team of survivors. Just be ready to put a bullet in your friends' heads if they succumb to the zombie blood plague.




JAMES SILK
© 2019



URBAN OASIS

First off, can we get a big round of applause for our Pet of the Year Runner-Up, Olive Glass? This beauty came into the Penthouse family last year when we shot her for the June issue. When we told her she was our pick for Runner-Up, she did a little victory dance, high-fived herself, and climbed into our makeup chair. We absolutely adore Olive and could not be happier to anoint her with this title.

Photography: Thom & Jheri
Hair & Makeup: Sahar Yakhi
Styling: Mish Barber-Way







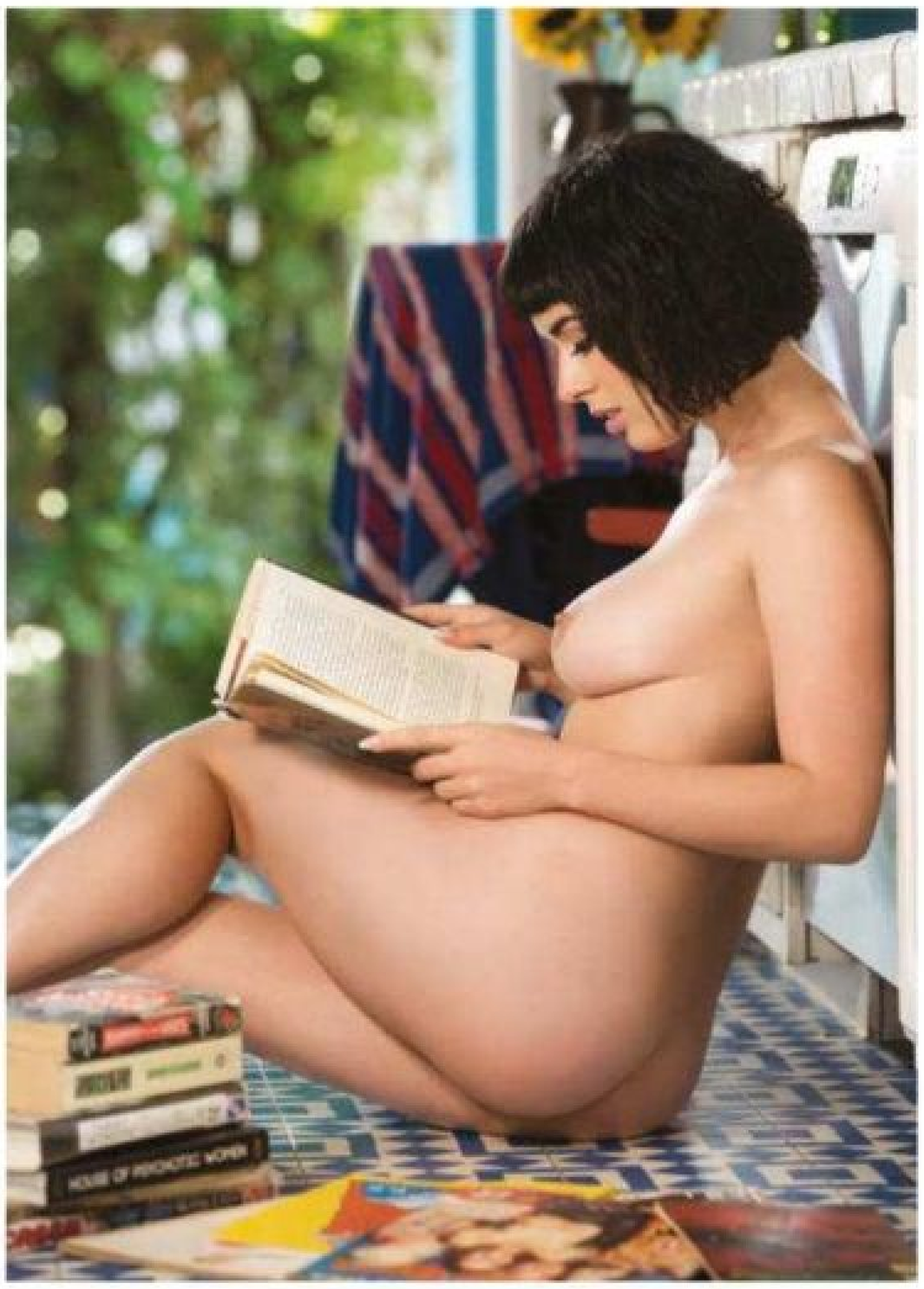


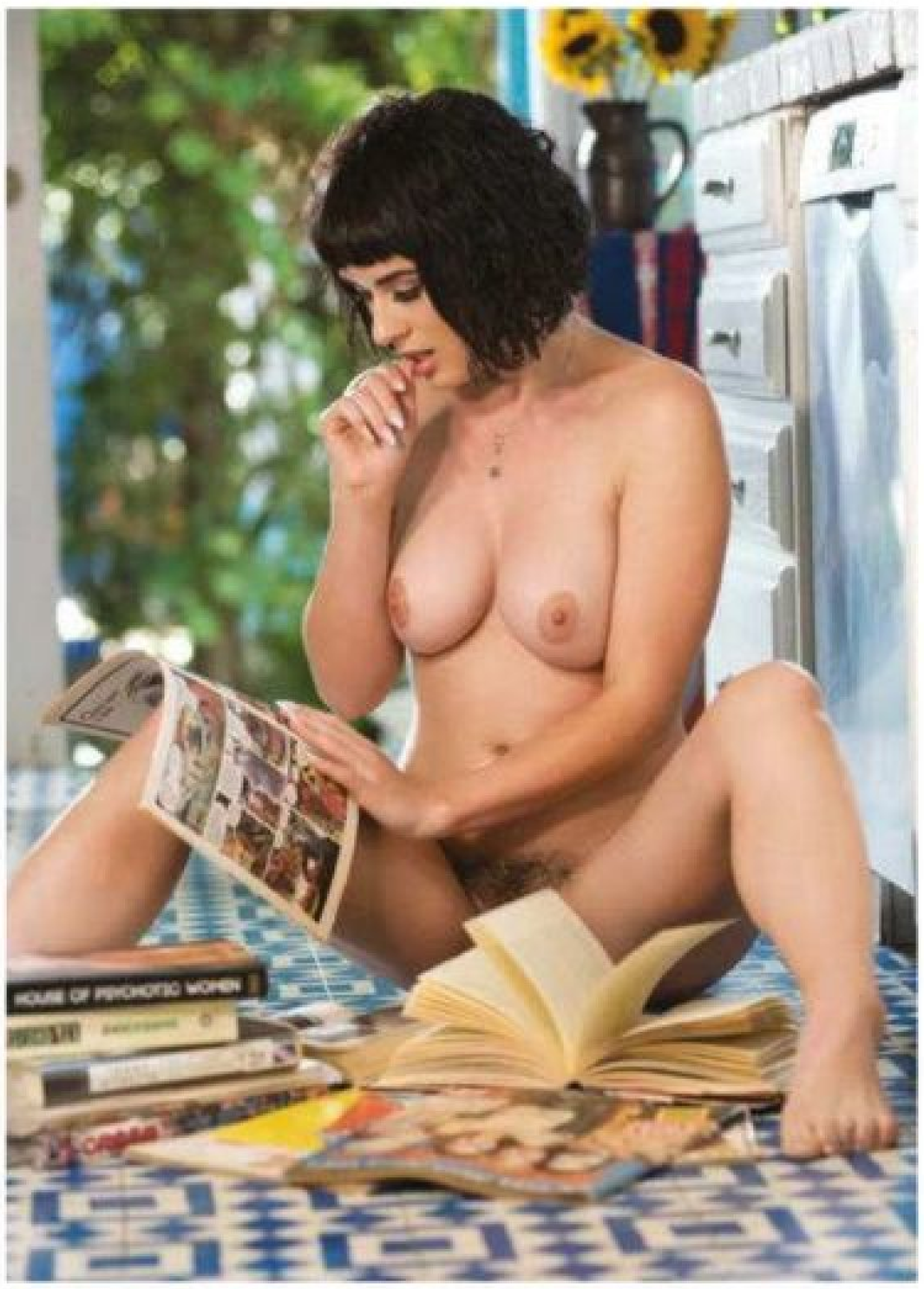


















SHADOWS IN THE VALLEY

A PORN STAR'S ACCUSATIONS OF ON-SET ABUSE HAVE ROCKED THE ADULT FILM COMMUNITY. FIVE MONTHS LATER, THE FALLOUT CONTINUES.

BY MITCHELL SUNDERLAND

EARLY this March, Nikki Hearts was preparing to speak on a sex-positivity panel in Los Angeles when a bad feeling hit her. The woman she'd married, fellow porn star Leigh Raven, was shooting a scene in the Valley, and Hearts hadn't heard from her.

Leigh should be done by now, she thought.

She tried calling. No answer. So she contacted Rico Strong, Raven's male costar.

"We good," Strong texted when Hearts asked if all was well with Raven and the shoot. "Bring ya black daddy [some] gummie bears please and ya smile."

He always has his cup, Hearts thought. She had worked and socialized with Strong before, and knew he had a habit of dropping gummie candy into his vodka. Hearts finished her panel, picked up the chewy candy, and drove to the industrial porn studio.

Some 20 minutes later, Raven and Strong emerged together from behind a barred door. As Hearts passed him the bag of gummies, Raven got into the small red car and sat silently. Hearts chatted with Strong for a couple minutes, the actor happy to be done with a six-hour shoot, and looking forward to decompressing with his candied vodka.

After they said goodbye, the two women drove off into the night. Raven was oddly quiet. "What's wrong?" Hearts asked as they drove down the 101 Freeway.

Raven, head shorn, heavily tattooed, burst into tears. "Oh, my God, what just happened?" she cried out, according to Hearts. Then she grew hysterical.

Strong, she said, had abused her on set.

■■■

RAVEN and Hearts had always liked Rico Strong. A 14-year veteran of the porn business, he had earned a reputation for professionalism and a sense of humor. He began shooting porn at age 18 to support his mother and grandmother, and within a few months he was pulling in $100,000 a year, he says. Over time, Strong became one of the most prominent African-American male porn stars of the Bush era. He calls himself a legend.

"People don't even recognize you in porn unless you work with Rico," he tells me in a phone interview. Without appearing alongside Strong, he suggests, "You're not a girl who can say she's a star doing interracial."

But it's no longer the mid-2000s. Like most porn stars, Strong's pay has declined (slightly, he says) thanks to the popularity of free tube sites. Moreover, in 2016 Strong suffered what he calls a "dick injury"—the erectile-dysfunction drug Caverject had given him priapism, his painful erection lasting 19 hours. In an emergency procedure, a doctor administered anesthesia and drained blood from Strong's penis with needles. A leading urologist, Dr. Tobias Kohler, likens the condition to "a heart attack of the penis." It could have ended Strong's porn career, but he recovered slowly and returned to work.

Earlier this year, Strong starred in an interracial gangbang alongside Hearts. Studios typically pay white women more to have sex with black men on camera. One performer said she received $2,500 for her first interracial scene—$1,500 more than her typical rate. Hearts showed up on set with Raven, Strong tells me. Noticing the carefully orchestrated design of tattoos covering nearly her entire body, Strong told Raven he loved the ink.

"I really, really, really liked [Raven's body art]," he reiterates in our interview. "These bitches are cool. They are hella cool. I love the relationship they have with each other. They are pretty—different pretty! They are unique."

On set at the gangbang, Strong and Hearts exchanged numbers and stayed in touch. Strong recalls Hearts sending him funny Snapchat clips and photos she took. "Nikki does great fucking photography work. She takes dope-ass pictures," Strong says.

"You're my girls," he liked to tell the women, according to Raven and Hearts. "You're my buddies."

The weekend after Valentine's Day, Hearts invited Strong to the Roosevelt Hotel. Located on Hollywood Boulevard, the place is a classic high-low Los Angeles staple: Marilyn Monroe used to live there, Lindsay Lohan used to drink there, and outside on the sidewalk homeless men sprawl while Johnny Depp impersonators duel for tourists' attention.

Hearts and Raven were at the Roosevelt socializing with porn industry friends. Having planned a staycation that weekend,



Leigh Raven and Nikki Hearts

they'd gotten a suite. After arriving, Strong hung out with the couple, partying, laughing, enjoying their company. A few weeks later, while the couple was shopping for a new leather couch, Raven got a text from Strong. A female scene partner had bailed, and he wondered if Raven could replace her.

Strong, Raven says, described the scene as "kinda rough" with "light racial play"—a description she didn't believe evoked the intense physical interactions expected of BDSM scenes, like those she'd shot for Kink and other companies. Strong said he didn't know what production entity was paying for or distributing the film. Regardless, Raven says she texted back, "All right, I'll rush my ass there." After all, Strong was a buddy.

■■■

WHEN Raven arrived at the address, she found a studio that looked like an auto shop. As she entered, she recalled seeing a warren of rooms, with one space a prison set, another containing piles of broken furniture, a third apparently a crash pad for an elderly man.

It was, Raven recalls, "a junkyard for porn."

The studio's owner was director Just Dave, a scruffy, tattooed industry veteran whose Twitter bio reads, "I shoot super hardcore the way it's supposed to be shot!"

He introduced himself to Raven. She says the space and the fact that Dave would be shooting the scene made her nervous. When Hearts worked on Dave's crew, she recalled Dave telling her, "I've been around dykes before. Dykes are mean. I better be nice to you."

The shoot began with Dave asking Strong and Raven for their list of do's and don'ts, which is standard practice before filming. This boundaries discussion appears early in the behind-the-

scenes footage Dave later released to the media. During these minutes, Raven does not appear visibly nervous. Seated beside Strong on a white couch in the white studio space, she smiles, her manner casual. "You like rough sex in your personal life?" Dave asked, by way of introducing the scene.

"I do," Raven replied, munching a green apple.

"Do you think it's safe to say this guy isn't breaking you?"

Raven giggled and looked at Strong. "I think we're going to be okay."

"I don't think I'm gonna break her!" Strong joked.

In between more bantering, Dave told Raven, "If there's anything we discuss and you do not like when we're doing it, you can always say something. I cut anytime I hear *stop, cut,* and *no*."

Raven agreed to a menu of slapping, including "butt smacks," "boob smacks," and "face smacks." Dave asked if she was okay "throwing up" apples. Brandishing the green fruit, Raven replied, "Woo hoo!" Dave then asked, "Is there anything you absolutely don't like?" After a brief pause, Raven looked Strong's way. "When we get to the sex," she told him, "I have a pretty shallow cervix, so if you're going to be slamming in there, it's not gonna feel so good. You can still fuck me rough, but be a little more cautious."

"We'll make sure you are lubed up," Dave replied.

When this discussion was over, Dave instructed Raven to put on a blue tank top bearing a picture of a cartoon donkey, symbolizing the Democratic party. The scene began with Raven on her knees while Strong stood over her, quizzing her about the party's history of racism. In response to her answers, he would slap her. The first slap happens roughly half an hour into the behind-the-scenes (BTS) footage, a crisp strike that makes Raven laugh in surprise.

"It wasn't a fake slap," she stated in a YouTube video Hearts shot three days later capturing Raven's account. "It wasn't a slap that we typically use in porn to make things look a little bit more intense than they actually are. It was very painful, and it definitely stunned me. I, you know, saw stars, so to speak."

"IT WASN'T A SLAP THAT WE TYPICALLY USE IN PORN TO MAKE THINGS LOOK A LITTLE BIT MORE INTENSE.... IT WAS VERY PAINFUL, AND IT DEFINITELY STUNNED ME."

In a precisely written, 3,600-word joint statement from Dave and Strong published by Adult Video News on April 12, Raven's reaction to the slap is characterized as a "long hearty laugh," implying that the contact couldn't have been that hard. There's another crisp, sudden smack roughly an hour into the BTS footage, causing Raven to go, "Oh!"

Insisting that he only delivered stage slaps, Strong denies that he hurt or ever would hurt Raven. "I would never hit a girl," he tells me. "I'm 225 pounds. If I hit a dude, I'm gonna break your face, bro. I know how to hit a girl and make it look good. She has to go home and see her family. I'm not gonna do that shit."

The veteran performer, whose scripted dialogue with Raven during the smacks, fellatio, and intercourse plays up their racial difference, goes on to reference one of the main characters, a cruel slaveholder, in a Quentin Tarantino movie.

"I love *Django Unchained,*" Strong says. "Leonardo DiCaprio is not a racist, but he said 'nigger' fucking 400 times in that movie. That doesn't make him a racist in real life. He's playing a character for his money in that movie. It's the same thing I am doing on the set for that movie. It's a character for this genre of porn that these fans like."

The face slaps gave way to an aggressive deep-throat scene, with the two performers taking various positions on and beside the couch. The act's length and physicality challenges Raven, who gasps for air at points, but she stays at it. The script called for her to go beyond gagging and actually regurgitate apple chunks as she fought to keep Strong's erect penis down her throat. She recalls her costar saying at one point, "I hate doing these. I've done, like, 40 of these [scenes]. It sucks, man."

In her YouTube account, Raven characterized the deep-throating as "a very, very, very rough blowjob where if I pulled back I got punished, so to speak." Elaborating, she stated, "Rico was then sticking his dick in my mouth as far as he could while I was giving him, you know, leg squeezes, leg nudges, to ease up, but he wasn't easing up…. It was becoming unbearable at this point, because I had big, giant pieces of apple coming up the sides of my throat where, essentially, I'm choking."

Claiming she was given additional apples so Dave could get the regurgitation footage he needed, Raven went on to describe herself during these mid-shoot minutes: "[I was] covered in saliva, snot. I'm sitting on the edge of the couch, not really saying much, wanting this to really be over."

In their April statement, Dave and Strong emphasized that Raven showed no concern in the pre-shoot discussion when Dave mentioned the "throat-fucking" requirement. And they pointed out that she even referenced a "blowbang" scene she shot in January where she hung upside for 45 minutes while being deep-throated by multiple performers. "I popped all blood vessels in my face," Raven tweeted after that shoot, "but it was all so worth it."

Continuing to defend every element of the shoot, the statement noted that Raven never called for the scene to stop. It added, "No one who's ever watched rough sex scenes would consider the March 6 scene among the roughest scenes out there. Not even close."

■■■

AFTER the grueling deep-throat session, Raven had sex with Strong in what she says was a sharply painful reverse-cowgirl position. In the BTS footage, which records two hours and 45 minutes of the six-hour shoot, there are moments when Raven whimpers; at one point she briefly wails.

"I was being penetrated extremely, extremely deep," Raven said in the YouTube video. "I was squeezing [Strong's] leg, his left thigh, I think, as hard as I could, while pushing away and wincing in pain and tears coming down my face, and he would smack my hand away, say some sort of 'dumb white bitch' comment."

During the sex, her legs began shaking uncontrollably, a moment she mentions in the video. Raven says the position's duress and the difficult penetration was not acknowledged by the men. She also claims Strong put his hands around her throat as they had sex near the end of the shoot, and again she saw stars, her vision briefly going black.

As to why she didn't protest, didn't ask Strong to stop, didn't ask Dave to cut, and didn't get up and leave, Raven says she was scared.

"I didn't know what could happen to me. I was in a warehouse, it was nighttime, there were multiple men on set, it was just me," she stated in the video. Raven says she did not expect the shoot to get this rough, and once it did, she told herself just to endure it.

The Adult Video News article publishing the April 12 statement also included Raven's written rebuttal. She said the reason she didn't end her participation in the scene was because her "defense

mechanisms" had kicked in. Even that surprised laugh when the first face smack arrived was a way of coping, she suggested. "Things only got worse" from there, she continued in her statement, "and I did my best to dissociate and get through it. I remained in a state of protection mode for the remainder of my time on set."

The shoot concluded with Dave filming a standard "exit video." On most porn sets, directors record these interviews, asking performers if they consented to the activities captured. Wrapped in a pastel knit sweater, Raven answers questions asked by a production assistant. During its 2:27 length, she's not visibly upset. She smiles, briefly laughs.


Just Dave

Asked to sum up the shoot, Raven says, "It was something new, for sure, but…it was good." The assistant points out that she never asked Dave to pause a scene and he seems impressed by her stamina, saying it's not typical for shoots like these.

Then he asks, "Was [Strong] attentive of your do's and don'ts?"

"Yes," Raven responds.

"Did you feel safe during the shoot?"

"Yes."

"Did you feel respected by staff?"

"Everybody was really nice and attentive," Raven answers.

"Would you ever shoot with us again?"

"Yeah."

Later, with Strong sitting beside Raven in the frame, she is asked, "And you weren't raped?" No, she says. Not long after that she was handed her $1,000 check and left.

■■■

THREE days later, Hearts posted the YouTube video with Raven sharing her account of the night. Wearing a navy hoodie and large-framed eyeglasses, gazing straight ahead, she discusses the shoot in detail for roughly 40 minutes.

"Why did I agree to everything in the exit interview?" she asks aloud, when I meet the performer in June. "How could I believe it was safe to say how I really felt about that scene? In what world would that have gone over well? I was alone, surrounded by men who had just crossed my boundaries. They were all 50 pounds heavier than me." She says some of their conversation during breaks did nothing to ease her mind. "Bottom line," Raven continues, "I was willing to say anything to get out of that warehouse safely."

■■■

WHEN Raven and Hearts got home that night, they laid in bed with their puggle and two cats, trying to process what happened. They were friends with Strong, they were unsure who had paid for the video, and Dave had claimed to have shot many such scenes. Raven says the director indicated he was scheduled to film a similar scene the next day, and she felt concerned about what the female performer might face.


Rico Strong

As for Hearts, she recalls struggling to make sense of it all.

"I really liked Rico and I like a lot of his friends," Hearts tells me in June. "I was super betrayed and confused, but I don't even think [Strong] knows he did something wrong. I felt so strongly that Dave allowed it and pressured it to happen. Rico was doing it for money."

"And I was taking it for the money," Raven says.

Turning to friends for support, Raven texted porn star Riley Nixon, sharing in broad, unsettling strokes what she said she'd been through. Before Raven even mentioned her costar, Nixon says she texted back, "Was this Just Dave's set?"

In January, Nixon herself had received an invite from Strong to shoot a video with "light racial play." To her, "light" meant Strong might say something like, *"Little white girl, you like that big black dick?"* She found it strange that he did not know the name of the production company, but her rent was coming, and she was broke. She agreed to the shoot.

At the set, Dave asked Nixon to put on a shirt that said "Feminist." During the scene, Strong asked her questions about feminism and smacked her face as she answered.

"I like getting slapped in the face when it's done properly," Nixon tells me. "It's great, but it's not done to cause extreme injury. You have to learn to do it properly. Rico does not know."

When the scene finally wrapped, Nixon stood up. Vomit, she recalls, drizzled down her body. She went to the bathroom and discovered a filthy floor. This was a time when ringworm had been traveling through the porn community, so Nixon grabbed an old washcloth and dropped it on the shower floor to stand on. Thinking she should document the conditions, she snapped a few photos, stepped into the shower, and tried to get clean in the dirty stall, which offered dishwashing liquid rather than body wash.

When direct-messaged about this account, Dave neither denied nor disputed Nixon's description of the shower. As for Strong's take on studio conditions, he says, "Some things aren't the best. But I felt okay."

Nixon sees one key difference between her experience and what Raven recounts. Soon after leaving the studio on that March night, Raven began to feel she had been victimized. A line had been crossed, she believed, and the word "rape" entered her mind.

Nixon does not characterize her own experience this way. "I am not trying to throw them in jail," she says. "I consented.… [Rico and Dave] need to learn or get a new job."

■■■

UNSURE of what to do with what Raven had told her, Hearts reached out to legendary porn star Buck Angel.

"What? *What?*" Angel responded when Hearts described what Raven allegedly experienced. As a 46-year-old trans man, Angel has long advised younger performers, even calling himself their "tranpa." He suggested Raven should go public with her account.

"It needs to be spoken about," Angel tells me in an interview. "The more this happens in our industry, and the rest of the world sees this, we are [going to be viewed] as perverts [who] rape women. This is a male-managed industry, and there is a huge disrespect for women." He pauses. "Even though I'm a transsexual man, I'm still a man, and I'm treated so much better than women in this industry."

It would not have been the first time a porn star made allegations of abuse. Linda Lovelace, star of the 1972 movie *Deep Throat,* accused her manager of rape in her notorious 1980 memoir *Ordeal*. Jenna Jameson detailed a lifetime of sexual abuse at the hands of various men in her autobiography *How to Make Love Like a Porn Star: A Cautionary Tale*. Retired porn star Shelley Lubben is one of several ex-performers who have alleged being raped by costars. In 2015, Stoya and other porn stars took to



Riley Nixon

"I WOULD NEVER DO ANYTHING IN THIS WORLD TO HURT A WOMAN, LET ALONE A WOMAN IN MY CAREER," STRONG SAID. "IT HAS TO DO WITH RACISM. SHE KNEW THE ATTENTION SHE'D GET IF SHE PUT IT ON A BLACK MAN."

social media to accuse male performer James Deen of sexual abuse (he denied all accusations).

All of these accounts and allegations became cautionary tales for young women entering porn. But Raven and Hearts were hoping that a lengthy, detailed video account, recorded fresh after the alleged incident, would not only act as an immediate industry alert but might also help bring about some actual change in gender relations on porn sets.

In this way, it could be another chapter in the #MeToo movement.

Raven spoke to Riley Nixon, explained her goals in going public, and the women agreed to film a YouTube video at a friend's house in the Hollywood Hills.

The March 9 video quickly went viral.

In response to the allegations, Rico Strong stated that he believed Hearts was in love with him and had set up Raven to falsely accuse him because she was angry that her wife was having sex with him on camera. "I would never do anything in this world to hurt a woman, let alone a woman in my career," Strong said. "It has to do with racism. She knew the attention she'd get if she put it on a black man."

"If Nikki was racist," Buck Angel tells me in response to Strong's conjecture, "she would not have shot [that gangbang film] with him in the first place."

Just Dave reacted by releasing the behind-the-scenes footage, which offers a wide shot of the set from a fixed position, with Raven's facial expressions not always visible. He sent the footage to longtime sex-industry reporter Tracy Clark-Flory, who had written about the YouTube accusations for *Jezebel*. Her April 14 story highlighted the fact that Dave and Strong made transphobic jokes on set, which prompted additional controversy.

"They didn't even fucking realize it [came off bad]," Hearts says of the trans jokes.

Given Dave's willingness to circulate the BTS footage, no one was surprised that the tape contained no smoking-gun evidence in support of Raven's account. As Clark-Flory wrote, "Her key allegations—that she was uncomfortable with the nature of the shoot, guided into a particular sexual position she had voiced concern about, pressured into eating apples to vomit on camera, penetrated deeply enough to cause pain, and scared of voicing her discomfort on set—cannot be ascertained from the video footage. Raven is shown laughing at several points in-between takes and also being quiet and looking tense."

The footage is available for anyone to access at several online venues, including AVN.com. Viewers can make up their own minds about how to interpret the rough-sex scenes and Raven's vocalizations, as well as her demeanor before and after the marathon session. But to Just Dave, this footage is case closed. When I direct-message him on Twitter, he writes, "The truth is irrelevant! Why let the truth get in the way of a good narrative? This girl made everything up! Everyone who has watched the BTS video knows it! But everyone is afraid of the backlash for defending me. I definitely have a shit ton of DM's from everyone telling me what a raw deal I got. But hey: That's life."

Declining an interview, Dave directed me to his April 12 joint statement. It's a careful text, with point-by-point rebuttal of Raven's claims. Flatly denying "every accusation or implication of assault, sexual assault, deception, bullying, and consent violations" made in the YouTube video, it insists Raven was fully briefed on the shoot's requirements. It mentions Dave's 15 years shooting porn. It ends by warning of the dangers of "one-sided Twitter trials." Addressing all porn directors and producers, the statement argues

that without better protocols for handling allegations, a false claim could destroy a career.

In Raven's same-day response posted on AVN.com, she contended that the face smacks were "flat-out violent." She wrote, "I do a ton of rough scenes. Probably some of the roughest in the business as a matter of fact. I am able to do this because of the fact that am not taken by surprise at any moment [and] the environment is controlled."

When she films "extreme BDSM scenes," Raven continued, those on set "know how to look for true pain or discomfort." Here, she said, "there were plenty of times I visibly cried, and pushed away at Rico, hoping that at some point Dave or [the assistant] would recognize my pain and cut." She reminds people that the BTS footage captured less than half the shoot. And she explained that her reason for going public was to "get the word out to other women who might be put in the same situation, as quickly as possible."

■■■

AS the YouTube video continued to circulate, Raven and Hearts spent tense evenings at home beside their beloved pets. Death threats began hitting their inboxes. Though some female porn performers publicly defended them, others attacked them on Twitter.

"Wow!" Buck Angel reacted when I asked about other actresses taking shots at the couple. "What does this say about this situation to me? It says women are fearful to lose their jobs, so they don't want to speak out."

During this period, the phone rang. Hearts hesitated, then answered. It was Ian O'Brien, Senior Director of Programs and Operations at an adult-industry advocacy group called the Free Speech Coalition.

"We need help," Hearts told O'Brien, saying she and Raven feared for their physical safety. O'Brien drove to their house with a box of pizza. Sitting down opposite a stripper pole and an oversize Chucky doll, he listened as the couple told their side of the story. He ended up booking them a hotel room and drove their pets to a 24/7 animal daycare.

"EVERYONE SAYS PORN IS ONE FAMILY, BECAUSE WE ALL MAKE OUR MIGRATION TO [THE AVN AWARDS]... BUT WE'RE ALL ONE BIG... INCESTUAL FAMILY."

Safe in the hotel, Raven and Hearts continued to encounter online attacks from female performers, members of the roughly 2,000-strong Valley porn community.

"Everyone says porn is one family, because we all make our migration to [the Adult Video News Awards in Vegas] once a year, and we're all [transplants], but we're all one big, literally *incestual* family," Hearts tells me. For a long time, the house the couple shared had been an unofficial shelter for distraught girls in the porn industry. These were young women who came to Los Angeles, ran into trouble (abusive boyfriends, drugs, money problems), and ended up crashing for a time in the safe space of this house.

"Now we are here alone," Hearts laments. "We don't have a lot of support."

■■■

IN the days following the March 6 shoot, Raven attempted to achieve more than social media justice. She believes directors are responsible for their workplace, not performers. She says, "[Dave's] just as much, or more, at fault." Troubled by the thought of other women working on his set, she called the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) for help. She wanted to report an unsafe workplace environment.

"Get there this day, this time, and you're going to find fucked-up shit," Raven recalls telling an official at the government agency. To her knowledge, the agency never investigated. (Cal/OSHA is not at liberty to discuss specific complaints, they told me.)

"OSHA does not care about porn," Buck Angel observes. "They don't think it's a legitimate career. I'm in the cannabis business now—it's exactly the same as the early porn business: the way people react to you, these stigmas."

More consequentially, Raven also went to the Devonshire Police Department, an LAPD precinct in Northridge, and filed a police report. She underwent a SART exam, which she says discovered cervix bruising and a vaginal tear. Later she was interviewed by a female detective. The session did not go the way Raven expected it would.

"Don't bullshit me, don't lie to me," she recalls the investigator saying as they sat alone in a room and went over her account. (The department did not return two voicemails requesting comment.)

"I have no reason to lie," Raven responded. "I'm flustered."

"I already watched the video," the detective said, according to Raven. "Just Dave brought it over."

"Then why did I have to explain all that?"

"That was not how it all happened," the detective stated.

Raven asked her if she had watched the entirety of the behind-the-scenes footage.

"I didn't watch it all," the investigator answered, according to Raven. "Since you didn't say 'no' and you didn't say 'stop', what can I see that shows you were in discomfort?"

"I was crying. I was saying 'ow'."

"There's no law against crying in porn."

When Raven came home, she wept to Hearts about her exchange with the female detective. The police department ultimately chose to drop the case.

"[The cops] were just as offensive as the incident," Hearts says.

■■■

THE debate around the Raven/Nixon video has emerged at a pivotal time for porn. In 2013, the Obama administration marked porn companies as "high risk," encouraging banks to stop taking adult performers' money. Throughout the Obama era, California politicians attempted to pass laws mandating performers use condoms. (It did not cross their minds that this would simply just push porn further underground.)

Under the Trump administration, the sex-worker witch hunt has arguably worsened. President Trump signed FOSTA (the Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act), a bill that also prevents sex workers from advertising online, and senators Elizabeth Warren and Marco Rubio are currently collaborating on new legislation that would expand the previous administration's war on sex workers' bank accounts. Meanwhile, Tennessee congresswoman Diane Black is insisting that porn causes school shootings.

"It was bad under Obama and it has gotten worse," says Buck Angel. "It has gone back to this puritanical everyone-is-on-drugs view."

Media stories about on-set abuse do nothing to help the industry's reputation. The accusations leveled against James Deen in 2015 were widely publicized. A year later, porn star Nikki Benz alleged that she was subjected to physical abuse on a set with director-performer Tony T and performer Ramon Nomar. She's suing them for sexual assault; they're suing her for defamation.

It has been difficult for the porn industry to prevent worker abuse. According to O'Brien, the Free Speech Coalition lacks formal policies and protocols for allegations of abuse. Production

companies did not band together to form the coalition to fight rape; they aimed to fight censorship laws, while providing a code of ethics.

As MindGeek, PornHub's parent company, increases its reach and porn stars jump to more indie work, the Free Speech Coalition has been forced to retool its mission.

"The realm of governing in the industry—especially something as complicated as these claims—is something we have to figure out," O'Brien says.

But the Free Speech Coalition only has so much control.

"The Free Speech Coalition is voluntary," O'Brien explains. "A lot of it is based off of trust. The decentralized nature of production makes it difficult to regulate. We can't just have a conversation with a company and say, 'Fix your policy.' They may have hired an outside contractor. We may or may not know them."

In other industries, workers would turn to the government to push for regulation, but porn workers don't have faith in this as an option. To their eyes, the government either targets them or ignores them.

"How do you talk about assault or violence in an industry that has had so many false presumptions about it without triggering biases," O'Brien remarks.

In July 2016, several porn performers established the Adult Performers Actors Guild (APAG) to address concerns of workplace abuse. APAG has encouraged performers to avoid taking to Twitter or Instagram for justice.

"It's the day of social media," says union president Alana Evans. "When we are upset, we like to go public." But Evans believes airing workplace grievances online prompts production companies to go on offense and avoid cooperating. To avoid a kangaroo court, APAG instructs women to file a union report and then allow the group to investigate.

IN OTHER INDUSTRIES, WORKERS WOULD TURN TO THE GOVERNMENT TO PUSH FOR REGULATION, BUT PORN WORKERS DON'T HAVE FAITH IN THIS AS AN OPTION.

APAG has fought against directors shooting exit videos, encouraging them to pay before the end of a shoot, and advising performers to say "no" upfront or in the moment to any activity they don't want to participate in. "Right then and there is where we take away consent," Evans says of exit videos. "You're extorting her. She's looking at either paying hundreds of dollars in kill fees or having sex and doing something she didn't want to do, because you'll make her pay. It is not a small amount of money."

In April, the Supreme Court of California ruled that many workers previously considered contractors are now employees. APAG believes this will make it easier for the union to negotiate with producers and protect workers. Still, even with this change, some porn veterans remain pessimistic. "Unions in the adult-film industry are difficult for a number of reasons, the biggest being the blurred roles of performer-producers," remarks Jizz Lee, a producer at Pink and White Productions. "There's also not enough financial infrastructure—thanks, tube-site piracy."

Lee and others see a more grassroots organization, the Adult Performer Advocacy Committee, as a possible solution. The group promotes a code of ethics, hosts performer mentorship programs and skill sharing, and offers other resources. After director Shine Louise Houston read their ethics guidelines, she stopped giving paychecks following exit videos and starting distributing the payments beforehand.

But not everyone in porn will self-regulate, Hearts points out.

"If you have shot any sex, you can be a porn director," she notes. And she makes the point that no one can force a director or producer to follow ethical guidelines.

■■■

THE March 6 BTS footage captured a professionally run set in terms of paperwork distributed and signed, the director proceeding through the boundaries and script discussions, the exit interviews and payments. But that doesn't mean everything about the shoot was transparent. For example, Strong says he doesn't know what company or entity was associated with it, or the one he shot with Dave and Riley Nixon earlier.

"I don't know whose site it is. I've never met the owner—anything," he tells me. "I know Just Dave is working for someone else. I've heard him call and say, 'I want this. I want that. Here's the script.' He sends it in."

As for these scripts, with their race-play dialogue, aggressive deep-throating, and regurgitation moments, Strong says he has toned some of them down prior to shooting. Elaborating, he states, "It was some of the racial play and some of the things they wanted me to say. I wasn't comfortable saying it, with everything going on in the media. I don't need to say that right now.... I don't want to go that deep into that character."

He says he also weighed in concerning the regurgitation requirements. "I can't handle throw-up," he tells me, saying he suggested what the women should ingest. "Let the girls only drink water and eat apple slices. We bought apple slices from Whole Foods. When you chew that up, it's just water."

As you might imagine, the controversy surrounding the March 6 shoot has impacted the work lives of Strong and Just Dave. Their joint statement addressed this. "Just Dave's shoots have ground to a standstill and Rico hasn't worked in more than a month," it pointed out, adding, "A leading talent agency's response to the accusations was to ban both from ever working with its roster."

The morning Strong and I talk, he says he woke up to a notice on his door saying the electric company was going to turn off his lights unless he paid his overdue bills.

"I have now not worked in 106 days," he tells me. He still supports both his mother and grandmother, and says both women are now suffering from cancer. He paid their medical bills out of pocket, but now he has run out of money. And because of his years of work in the adult-film industry, he says it's hard to find another job.

"I never even wanted to do porn," he tells me. "I'm stressed out. I know I didn't do anything. I know I would never put someone in an uncomfortable situation." Looking back over his many movies, Strong says there were times when women declined to perform certain sexual acts, and he told directors, "Kill the scene. I'll eat the [financial] bullet."

"It fucked my life up," he says of what happened. "My life is a disaster."

■■■

RAVEN and Hearts have had their own struggles.

Arriving early at their house one day in June, I wait beside a doormat reading "Go Away." The women arrive with McDonald's hamburgers and weed. They welcome me into their tidy home, where I spot a row of Converse sneakers and see-through stripper heels. Raven wears a hoodie over her now fully shaved

head, shuffling around in furry slippers. Hearts rocks purple pants, an Evil Angel sweater. The whole house smells of candles.

Sitting on their leather couch, they discuss porn-world rumors and conspiracy theories about Hearts. While I was reporting this story, a porn star told me she had heard that Burning Angel, a popular alternative production company, had fired Hearts for alleged Nazi ties. (A Burning Angel spokesperson dismissed the story as ridiculous.) To the surprise of Raven and Nixon, Hearts received most of the criticism.

"They have this conspiracy that Nikki put me up to this, because she is a jealous wife, and I had chemistry on set with Rico," Raven says. "There have been performers that have completely turned on me. They said I made this up to get fame and notoriety. Please tell me where the money is coming from."

In fact, producers and directors have stopped calling. Raven estimates she has lost 90 percent of her work, with only Penthouse and Evil Angel booking her as of press time. Hearts previously worked behind or in front of the camera three to five days a week, but all her porn work has vanished. Still, she insists she is fine with being excommunicated.

"I've exited porn," Hearts says. "I can't work with these people, with this kind of shit."

Although Riley Nixon has booked scenes with Kink and a few other producers, she hasn't worked much either. Raven, Hearts, Nixon, and Strong have all ended up in a similar situation: exiled from the San Fernando Valley's most notorious industry.

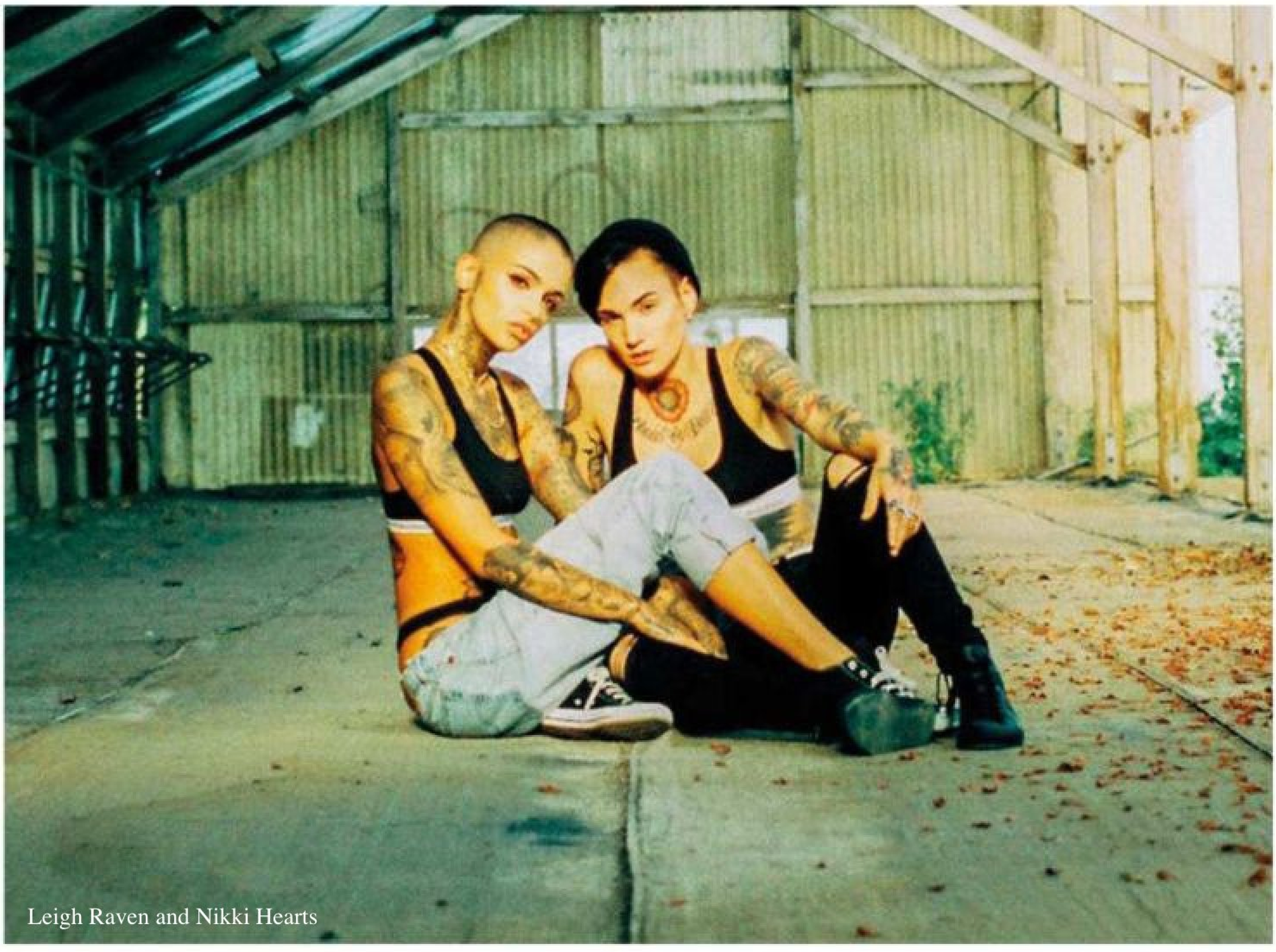
Raven and Hearts admit empathizing with Strong. "He was doing his job to get his paycheck," says Raven. Still, as that March night comes back, she adds, "But at the same time, anybody with any morals or basic understanding of morals would have backed off."

Hearts tells me she used to be idealistic about the porn industry, believing it could help American sexual attitudes broaden and evolve. Her view has changed.

"Porn is joked over and laughed at, like it's not a real job," she says. "I am seeing now why people think that. If you work at McDonald's, you are treated better."

When Raven and Hearts posted the YouTube video, they hoped to help women performers avoid what they viewed as a potentially dangerous situation. And they believed it could help lead to greater awareness of the way women are treated in porn. Instead, both the accusers and the accused have become characters in a story with tragic outlines. It's a tale that seems part *Rashoman,* that classic Akira Kurosawa film about how different people can interpret the same event in contradictory ways, with truth elusive. And it's a tale of what can go wrong when accusations go viral in an era where gender relations are so supercharged, and people so quickly pick sides. No one wins in this story.

Mitchell Sunderland was senior staff writer at VICE. He lives in Los Angeles, and his stories have been viewed by millions. He is at work on his debut nonfiction book, an investigation into the misunderstood pet industry, from a third-generation puppy person who was raised in the stockrooms of Florida pet stores and on the puppy farms of the Midwest.



Leigh Raven and Nikki Hearts

DOUBLE FISTING



1

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY AFRICA STUDIO



2



3



4

VODKA FOR PEOPLE WHO HATE VODKA

VODKA: fermented potatoes, water, and Russian elbow grease. Normally a spirit reserved for citrus-infused cocktails to mask its ethanol taste. Does anyone really love sipping vodka? Not usually, but that will change after you taste-test these four exceptional bottles.

1. CHOPIN POTATO VODKA $34

Creamy, full-bodied, and a pageant winner, Chopin is a favorite among those who savor the aroma in their glass before even taking a sip. It's not often that a vodka feels this sophisticated, a drink you should be sipping neat, like a fine scotch. College girls mix average vodka with cranberry juice and party their clothes off. A different animal completely, Chopin Potato Vodka will have you rethinking this clear liquid. Martini, anyone?
chopinvodka.com

2. FOG POINT BY HANGAR 1 $129

The name sounds German, but this upscale spirit company is based in California and prides itself on making the best vodka from the state's natural goodness. Fog Point is their super-California label where they blend Bay Area fog-turned-water with vodka crafted from the distilled wine of Napa Valley's Pine Ridge chenin blanc and viognier. The result? A fruity, crisp sipping vodka that will blow your mind.
hangarone.com

3. REYKA VODKA $23

This Icelandic vodka is a true piece of the frosty region. Bottles start with glacial springwater that runs through an ancient lava field, and its barley and wheat is distilled in a rare, high-copper Carter-Head still, resulting in an unbeatably smooth taste. It's handcrafted in small batches by local pros proud that their "green" distillery is powered by geothermal energy. This wonderfully pure vodka is like the bacon that turns vegans into carnivores.
reyka.com

4. AYLESBURY DUCK VODKA $25

Flavorful and medium-dry, this New York-based vodka is a lightbodied mouth of delicious with notes of pepper, rhubarb, and a bracing finish. Impressively distilled, with the product moving through three separate copper-plated column stills from the 1940s, Aylesbury's taste is golden good and you can't beat the price. Plus, its branding is spot-on: two sketched half-men wrestling one another.
aylesburyduckvodka.com



INFINITE BETTY

Our August Pet of the Month Sloan Harper is as down-to-earth as she is beautiful. A tomboy at heart, this Croatian-American beauty grew up on the beaches of Southern California and considers herself more in tune with the fish than the freaks up on land. She couldn't have been happier to hang out in the water all day, even if it meant sporting skimpy vintage bikinis.

Photography: Suss Oldmen
Hair, Makeup & Wardrobe: Teri Groves

























SHARE THE LOVE

Did you just have the wildest night of your life? Did your greatest fantasy come true?
Or did you spy the sensual goings-on of other uninhibited adventurers.

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and you may see your letter in these very pages.

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PENTHOUSE

SLOAN HARPER — AUGUST 2018 PET OF THE MONTH



PENTHOUSE

SLOAN HARPER — AUGUST 2018 PET OF THE MONTH







SLOAN HARPER

Vital Stats:

32C-25-35

24 years old

5'4"

Hometown: Redondo Beach, California

When we were on set, we got you into that vintage one-piece and you burst out laughing in the mirror. What was up, spaz?

When the makeup artist put that shimmering lipstick on me, I couldn't help but get all worked up. I looked just like an 80s swimsuit model! I had never seen myself like that before and it totally tripped me out.

You called yourself a "fish out of water," so we were pretty psychic to center your entire layout around a pool.

As far back as I can remember, I have loved being in the water. There is nothing better than spending my days anywhere in the water and under the sun.

Speaking of sun, how do you feel about living out here in the City of Angels?

L.A. will forever and always be my home. The only drag is the traffic, obviously.

What's your biggest pet peeve?

Rude, disrespectful people, or blatant bullies.

Would you rather chop off all your hair, or never shave again?

I'd rather keep all my body hair than have to chop everything off. I could never let go of the crown on my head.

How do you wind down after a brutally long day?

After brutal days I usually unwind with loved ones at dinnertime, preferably outside or under the stars. I'll enjoy a toke or two while we all vent about our day. I'm happiest when barbecuing or hanging out by the firepit.

What's the best meal you've ever had?

I have to say that the best meal I ever had was eating out my girlfriend after we finally showered after a two-week camping trip in the woods of Northern California. [Laughs] 🗝

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A DA VINCI OF THE DOLLAR

MEET THE EX-CON AND MASTER COUNTERFEITER WHO'S MAKING A SPLASH IN THE ART WORLD.

INTERVIEW BY SETH FERRANTI

ARTHUR J. Williams Jr. has the distinction of being the first person to successfully replicate the 1996 $100 bill, which the U.S. Treasury designed to be counterfeit-proof. Integrating old-school printing-press methods with digital technology, the Chicago-born Williams did the impossible. As the Secret Service tried to trace the source, Williams reportedly created as much as $10 million in funny money, his visual skills allowing to him to craft a product stunningly realistic on every level, from the watermark and security thread to the ink and imagery. His exploits were captured in a best-selling 2009 book, *The Art of Making Money*. Eventually apprehended, the former petty thief turned gangster turned master counterfeiter was put behind bars for a third time. When Williams emerged, he had transformed himself yet again, walking to freedom as an exceptionally gifted painter.

How did you first get involved painting and creating art?

It started when I was in prison. I'd always had a fascination with old currency. I used to collect bills from the 1800s. I marveled at the beauty the old engravers could produce. I always felt like America was a strong, powerful force and the money back then actually showed that. I started drawing with a pencil. I was creating pencil images throughout my transfers from FCI Manchester to FCI Big Springs. I didn't really start painting until I got to FCI Forrest City in Arkansas. I started with oils. A fellow inmate taught a class. I read art books. You don't have an iPhone to Google images or watch instructional videos. Using books, I learned by studying the masters, like da Vinci and Michelangelo. I read up on colors and techniques. By the time I got out, I could paint anything my eye could see.

After serving seven years, you hit the streets in 2014. How was your transition?

Before going in, I was a pretty powerful dude in Chicago. I knew all the heads of the mobs. If I needed money, I just printed it. I could have gone to the basement, printed $100 million, and been done with it. Maybe I should have done that. But instead, I just printed what I needed. When I got out of prison it was real humbling. I only had a little bit of money. My wife had left me. She was down in Texas with the three kids. I felt really alone. I didn't know what I was going to do. A really good friend of mine that I'd let down, Mark Schwartz, got me a job cleaning for $15 an hour. I went from being a real powerhouse in Chicago to scrubbing toilet bowls.

How would you compare printing money to painting images of it?

Mixing paints is kind of like mixing inks. I feel like I'm still printing money. I'm printing it on canvas now. I get to have that same feeling. I got pieces that have watermarks in them, the same as money. I got the Capone piece. It has a strip like the bills. I also put little quotes within the strips. I got paintings that glow underneath, ultraviolet like money. I got almost every security feature that's in the bills. Watermark. Strip. The interference. Changing colors. Ultraviolet. All these things, even micro stuff. I got micro-handpainted stuff I did that's insane. I basically applied all the security features that were on actual money into my art. I got secret symbols in my art. Stuff that you don't even know is there.

What was it like growing up in a tough part of Chicago?

I grew up in Bridgeport, on the South Side. I was stealing change from parking meters to put food on the table as a kid. Life wasn't easy. My mom—the bipolar kicked in real bad. We ended up in the projects. Gangs, drugs, violence, the whole thing. Not too many people made it out of there. I had some friends get killed. I'd been shot. That's when I ended up meeting the old man who took me under his wing and showed me how to print money. I was there until I was about 21. The last time I got shot I was like, I'm done. I went down to Texas. Nine years later, I came back to the same neighborhood.

Your career has taken off since showing your paintings at last year's Art Basel Miami. What's it feel like to have your hard work rewarded?

PHOTO COURTESY OF OBSCURE DIAMOND

Williams Jr. and his creations at
his new Da Vinci Gallery in Chicago.



Williams Jr.'s unique aluminum works at Lacuna Lofts in Chicago.

"BEFORE GOING IN, I WAS A PRETTY POWERFUL DUDE IN CHICAGO. I KNEW ALL THE HEADS OF THE MOBS. IF I NEEDED MONEY, I JUST PRINTED IT. I COULD HAVE GONE TO THE BASEMENT, PRINTED $100 MILLION, AND BEEN DONE WITH IT."

Three years ago, I was at a point where I felt ready to give up. Nothing was working. The jobs I had been doing were paying cheap. I got real close to feeling like, man, this shit just ain't working. I didn't look at the painting as something that I'd make money off of. I thought I would be painting houses the rest of my life. I kind of gave up on the dream of being an artist. I still painted but I didn't look at it as, okay, this is what my life's going to be. Then my house burned down and I lost everything. The only thing that survived the fire was my paintings. [Real-estate developers] Joey Jr. and his dad Joseph Cacciatore Sr. gave me a studio at Lacuna artist lofts. They've supported me since day one.

Art Basel Miami was last December. I didn't know anybody down there. I didn't really expect much. I was like, *Let's just go down there and let's just make contact. Let's see what it's about.* I packed up the truck and drove down to Miami. When I got there, there were freaking Ferraris, Lamborghinis, everything, pulling up. I ended up selling everything to one guy. An awesome dude. He invited me to his yacht. We showed the art there.

You recently opened your own gallery.

I wanted to open this gallery on Morgan. I didn't have the money to do it, but I believed I was going to get it somehow. On the day they put the for-rent sign up, I had coffee in Bridgeport with my managers. I told them, "Guys, if we're going to do this we got to go all-in. I got an apartment nearby. I can walk to the gallery." They wanted to look at it. We went and looked at the place and what do you know? They wrote a check to the landlord right then and there. The space looked jacked-up. They were like, "Art, are you sure you want to use this for your gallery?" And I said, "Hell yeah, guys. I got the vision."

Everybody was telling me I was crazy for getting this spot. For the next two months, we jammed on the gallery. I was getting help from local plumbers, electricians. It was really cool how the neighborhood came together to help me with this thing. I went back down to Miami and sold some more stuff to help pay for the continued work on the gallery. One of my collectors down in St. Louis came through and bought two pieces just when we were running out of money and I was getting nervous. Art always saves Art. Every time.

People are comparing your work to Andy Warhol's.

Warhol gave me a blueprint for bringing the printing that I loved and the painting I now love and making them one. I studied what he did and how he did it. I think the difference between me and Warhol is, I realized art could be more than having people work for you. It has the ability to bring people together from all walks of life, like it did at my last show. I had blacks, Latinos, whites, Italians. Just everyone together having a great time. It showed me that I can reinvent myself through art.

Something that trips me out is that I know a lot of artists and they don't want to be social. They don't want to be in the crowd. That's cool. I get it. There's a level of privacy to art, but I think to be human is to be social and to love people. As you love people, you'll create better art. That's what's happening to me. I'm seeing my artwork improve. I'm becoming more creative.

Recently you've been combining images of money and pop-culture icons, right?

These new pieces, the Bond girls, or even the Floyd Mayweather piece—that was the first one I did where I printed with the gold—are exciting to me. I change the bills to where they're not the same. I get it to where it looks really close, then I change them. When I'm painting I mix colors. I find the texture of what I want to paint on. Different canvases. Maybe different papers, even glass, metal. I've painted on everything. Clay. It's an experiment.

PHOTO COURTESY OF OBSCURE DIAMOND



Arnold Schwarzenegger posing with Williams Jr. and a new piece at a charity fund-raiser in Los Angeles.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FRANK GIROLAMO

"I THINK THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ME AND WARHOL IS I REALIZED ART COULD BE MORE THAN HAVING PEOPLE WORK FOR YOU. IT HAS THE ABILITY TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE."

I play with a lot of different things. I like to use different shading to do illusions within the image. With the collection I got now, the Icon Collection, the painting that got me going down in Miami was the Marilyn Monroe. But all the icons I did–Marilyn, Prince, Dorothy, Judy Garland–all these people died of overdose. The reason I did them was because my aunt and uncle both died of overdoses. My sister's hooked on pain medicine. It's real to me.

You did a charity event with Arnold Schwarzenegger in Los Angeles. He bought a painting. What was it like hanging out with the Terminator?

I had the Arnold event, I had my gallery opening, and I was invited to go to Cleveland to speak to the Browns. I met defensive coordinator Gregg Williams and he was intrigued by my story. It was all back-to-back. It was overwhelming to me, the trifecta. In L.A., I met Arnold, Jason Statham, others. Arnold was awesome. Dude was like one of us. He was a real dude. He was digging the story. Loved the art. He spent time with me. I didn't know what to expect from these Hollywood stars, but they were all freaking awesome. At the end of the night they auctioned off some of my work and we raised $150,000 for kids. Blew my mind. People always congratulate me, but I tell them this is just the beginning.

Seth Ferranti is a former federal prisoner whose writings have been featured on VICE, Don Diva, and Gorilla Convict. He's also the author of the crime series Street Legends, and the comic series Crime Comix.

MOURNING THE DEATH OF THE A.C.L.U.

BY ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ

WHEN I was a young lawyer, I worked hand in hand with the American Civil Liberties Union in defending the free-speech rights of *Penthouse* magazine and other media that specialized in what the government called "pornography" or "obscenity," and what its consumers regarded as erotica (hence the expression, "What they like is pornography, what we like is erotica"). In those days, real civil libertarians saw the government's effort to ban such material as full-frontal censorship in clear violation of the First Amendment. That was before radical feminists demanded that the A.C.L.U. stop defending sexist material and start defending the rights of women not to be offended, abused, and even raped.

Despite the lack of evidence of any connection between erotic images and rape, a group of feminists led by the late Andrea Dworkin and Professor Catherine MacKinnon claimed that freedom from pornography was a basic civil liberty and human right. They called me a "pornocrat" for defending the rights of pornographers.

We won that battle and pornography is now pervasive on the internet, in hotel rooms around the world (with several important exceptions), and in adult theaters (the few that still exist). With a few clicks one can watch Stormy Daniels earning her living in Technicolor. Although the Supreme Court still does not regard obscenity as protected by the First Amendment, adult pornography has become mainstream and legal as a matter of practice. There has been no increase in sexual assault crimes, and no reputable scientist has found an empirical connection between pornography and rape.

The issue of pornography, therefore, has not become a divisive one in the A.C.L.U., because there are no prosecutions of those who disseminate adult pornography to adults. In light of the A.C.L.U.'s movement away from civil liberties and toward agenda-driven left-wing politics, it is fair to ask how the current board of the A.C.L.U. would deal with a case involving the prosecution of an adult movie theater, such as the ones I litigated back in the sixties, seventies, and eighties.

My first Supreme Court argument, back in the late 1960s, was on behalf of the owner of the Symphony Cinema Theatre, an art theater that showed European films. He was prosecuted and sentenced to prison for showing *I Am Curious (Yellow),* an antiwar film that included nudity and some sexual activity. Today that film would probably get a G rating and could be shown on network television. But back in the day, prosecutors claimed that allowing adults to watch the film would destroy our country. How far we have come, with the help of the A.C.L.U. I would not have a high level of confidence that today's A.C.L.U. board would be as unanimous about this issue now as it was back then.

The A.C.L.U. has undergone a dangerous change from a nonpartisan organization that defends the civil liberties of all, to a partisan organization that now spends a large amount of its budget on elections and other partisan events. It would be hard for a civil libertarian like me to get elected to the board, because I have committed the cardinal sin of defending the

ORIGINAL PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / BY LISA F. YOUNG



THE A.C.L.U. HAS UNDERGONE A DANGEROUS CHANGE FROM A NONPARTISAN ORGANIZATION THAT DEFENDS THE CIVIL LIBERTIES OF ALL, TO A PARTISAN ORGANIZATION THAT NOW SPENDS A LARGE AMOUNT OF ITS BUDGET ON ELECTIONS.

civil liberties of President Donald Trump.

During the investigation that led to the resignation of Richard Nixon, I helped persuade the board of the A.C.L.U. to defend the rights of the despised president, including his right not to be named as an "unindicted co-conspirator," since there was no mechanism for him to defend himself against such a charge.

Today the A.C.L.U. is on the forefront of defending the excesses of prosecutors who are investigating President Trump. Its legal director vigorously supported the search of the office, home, and hotel room of Michael Cohen, President Trump's personal lawyer. They pooh-poohed the notion that seizing lawyer-client documents that might well include confidential communications presented a core issue of civil liberties. They implicitly approved the use of FBI agents and prosecutors—rather than judicial officers—as members of the "taint team" that would read each and every communication and decide which were privileged and which were not.

Had the shoe been on the other foot—had Hillary Clinton been elected president and had her lawyer's office searched—you can be sure that the A.C.L.U. would have taken a completely different position. For the current A.C.L.U., agenda-driven issues—especially "getting Trump"—trump basic civil liberties.

The director of the A.C.L.U. demeans critics like me by calling us "the old guard." But his ageist *ad hominem* attacks do not conceal the reality that the old A.C.L.U. was far more protective of neutral civil liberties than is the new A.C.L.U.

Alan M. Dershowitz is professor emeritus at Harvard Law School and author of Trumped Up: How Criminalization of Political Differences Endangers Democracy. Follow him at @AlanDersh



SUMMER GOTH

Our August CyberCutie Ari Dee may look like she's allergic to summer—and she kind of is, considering she can't swim—but this Oklahoma-born beauty has no problem with the constant Southern California sunshine. (She bathes in SPF 50. Duh.) Ari Dee is a big *Penthouse* fan and was floored when we finally came to our senses and asked her to shoot with us. And who wouldn't want to spend a day with Morticia Addams's hot young niece?

Photography: Thom & Jheri

















ARI DEE

Vital Stats:

34B-26-34

5'8"

30 years old

You're originally from middle America. Do you miss it?

Yes and no! I miss some of the great people and will always have a sense of nostalgia for where I come from, but it's such a privilege getting to drastically change up your environment to achieve opportunities you likely wouldn't get otherwise.

Why did you start camming eight years ago?

I was already comfortable with nude modeling, so when I came across some super-hot videos of girls camming I thought, I want to do that! It really spoke to my exhibitionist side. There can be vulnerability in nudity, but feeling comfortable with my sexuality in front of others has always made me feel powerful.

Is camming addictive?

It definitely can be, especially if you have an awesome community of fans and friends to spend time with. You can find yourself canceling plans to stay home and chat with some of your favorite people online instead. But I find it's healthy to take breaks. It's always the most fun and the sexiest when you're in a position to present the best version of yourself and be comfortable with your audience.

What's the best trip you've ever been on?

I honestly love a relaxing getaway as much as an adventurous one, so I'd have to say anytime I get to go anywhere by train and be surrounded by beautiful views. That's the best. I would love to be able to travel more often.

What's your idea of a perfect Sunday?

Getting to relax with good company, read a new book, or play videogames. I treasure the simple pleasures in life the most.

What's the worst job you've had?

Being a "breakfast hostess" at a hotel was probably the worst. Everyone is grumpy in the morning and happy to make a huge mess. It was like I was in a bad sitcom from the fifties. One time I dumped a five-gallon bag of milk on myself.

Would you rather be able to detect any lie you hear, or get away with any lie you tell?

I'd much rather be able to detect any lie. Lies always catch up with people, even if nobody else finds out they are lies, so I wouldn't want the power to lie freely. Honesty is the best policy.

You are *sooo* Oklahoma. We love it.

Find more of Ari Dee at https://mfc.im/AriDee or see more at Penthouse.com



By Mish Barber-Way

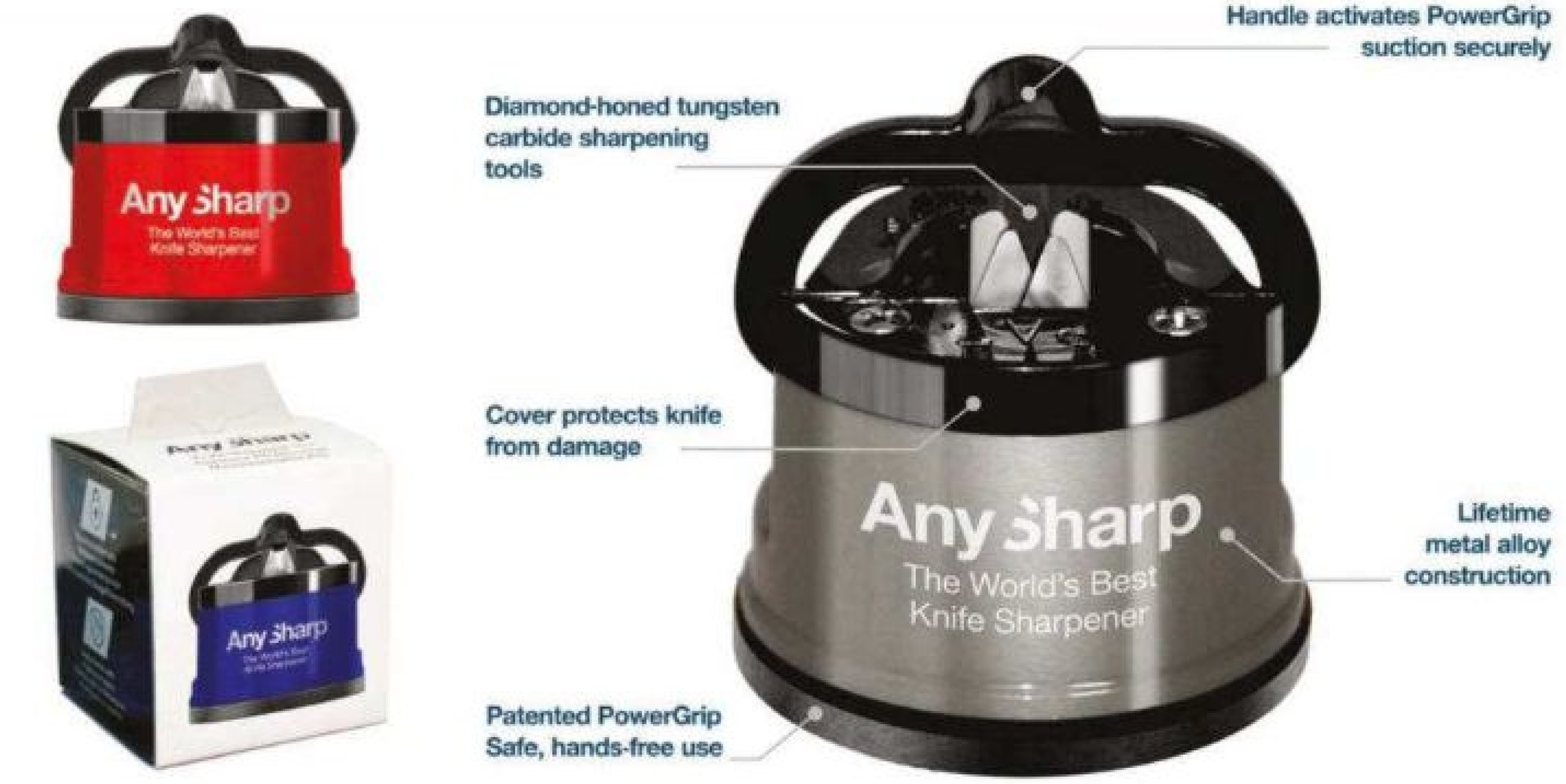
WORX 2 X 20 TRIMMER/EDGER WITH VARIABLE SPEED • $150

My husband is beyond addicted to buying tools. His garage is a graveyard of Makita rechargeable batteries and hot, dirty cordless chain saws and sanders. I gave him the WORX Trimmer/Edger to test out, because he knows his shit when it comes to tools. (I'm not going to pretend I can accurately judge a trimmer. Get real.) In the words of my husband, "When it comes to cordless power tools, people often pick a brand and stick to it. I chose Makita because the tools are solid, and they make any tool cordless. However, after using the WORX trimmer/edger, I'm sold, and I've decided to invest in WORX products for all my lawn maintenance." My husband and I just bought a house in the mountains, so we left our low-maintenance succulent Los Angeles garden behind for pine trees, lilacs, wild weeds, and desert flowers. I remember my husband getting *extremely* pissed off with the corded weed whacker. "I spent more damn time chasing around the cords than I did using the tool," he said. I get the appeal of cordless. I have a cordless vacuum and it rules my domestic world. Over all, my hard-headed husband loved WORX, not only for the decent price, but the durability and how easy the trimmer was to put together. He liked WORX so much, he started looking up other products he now "has to get." You really know how to win over a junkie, WORX. Thanks a lot. **worx.com**



ROLLORS • $50

All lawn games are boring when you first open the box, but after reading the rules and setting up the weird wooden pegs and balls, you think, *Why not?* This is how I felt when I picked up Rollors. My sister was visiting, and she's a schoolteacher with the patience of a saint, so I made her read the instructions and figure out the game. Rollors is basically a combination of bowling and bocce, which would be boring if it didn't end up igniting a raging competition. Maybe it's my family? We love to drink, play cards, and mess with each other, so it was only natural that we turned this wholesome family lawn game into a full-on war. We made bets, established teams, and actually had a blast. Beer and whiskey required. **rollors.com**



ANYSHARP GLOBAL KNIFE SHARPENER • $12

Nothing is more annoying than a dull kitchen knife when you're trying to make dinner. I'm about to get all Joan Rivers on you here, so pretend I'm in your television giving you the best infomercial you could ask for. The AnySharp universal knife sharpener is a must-have. I know it seems like a big fat "who cares" when it comes to kitchen stuff, but for $12, everyone should own this compact sharpener. It suctions to your countertop, pops off easily, and fits any knife. There are so many things I always neglect to get for myself that I need in the kitchen: lemon squeezer, salad spinner, and a knife sharpener. The struggle is over. No longer do I have to scream at heirloom tomatoes when I can't even pierce the skin. **anysharp.com**

BURN, BABY, BURN

BY JENNY NORDBAK

FIRE licked across the skin of my inner thigh, but it only fueled the orgasm that was building. *This is heaven,* I thought, laughing aloud at the image. *Flames belong in hell, and if this is what hell feels like, it's better than heaven! That's where all the fun people will be anyway….*

Pyromania is what most people think of when I mention fireplay, but maniacs just do it for the thrill. Pyrophilia is what it's called when you derive sexual gratification from the experience, and there was no question about whether it was turning me on.

I had done fireplay one other time, but it was in a performance setting, so there were limits to what we could do. I was wildly aroused, but couldn't get off until I made it home, touching myself while remembering the rush of fear and excitement that had rocked through me on the stage. This time we were in private, at a hotel pre-party in Vegas, so we could be much naughtier.

Fireplay is best done when everyone is sober, so we started the night off with it. I hadn't had a chance to relax and get used to the idea yet, so I was nervous as my friend Raven bound my wrists above my head to a post. I plastered a smile on my face to hide my apprehension while Scott, the Dom I was playing with, laid out his implements.

I was familiar enough with the process to recognize the cup of flammable liquid and the stick-like device he would be using to spread it across my skin. The other stick would stay lit and be used to touch the place on my skin where he had spread the fluid. The thin layer of liquid on the surface of my skin would ignite, but before it could actually burn me, he would wipe it out. This process would continue in a pattern of smearing, lighting, and wiping all across my body. If done correctly, it didn't have a chance to burn the skin, but that didn't mean it didn't sting.

I shivered as I watched Scott get everything ready, not sure if it was nerves or excitement. He looked up and seemed to read it on my face, so he called Raven back over.

"Scarlett looks a little tense. Why don't you help her to relax before we start?"

Raven dropped to her knees in front of me and slid my panties to one side. I jerked in my bonds when she pressed her tongue to my clit, but quickly found myself thrusting my hips to her mouth for more. She knew just how I liked it and was deliberately not quite giving it to me.

Within a few minutes, she had thoroughly distracted me, so I wasn't even thinking about fire when Scott approached. My sole focus was the feeling of her warm, wet tongue sliding back and forth across that bundle of nerves.

Raven stayed put on her knees between my legs as Scott approached, so he started with my arms and chest. The first time he lit some of the fluid, I jerked hard when I saw the flames, unable to convince my brain that it was safe. It's impossible to ever get used to the sight of your skin on fire.

Raven thrust a finger inside me, unfairly pulling my attention back to her as Scott continued to swipe, light, and wipe the fire out. I couldn't tell if I was shaking from the adrenaline or the orgasm she kept denying me.

I could smell the singed hair from my arms, and my skin was stinging in all the places he had already worked. Some people like to be blindfolded for fireplay, but part of the thrill for me was watching the flames dance across my skin for the fraction of a second that he left them lit. They were both beautiful and terrifying.

Scott tapped Raven on the shoulder, letting her know that he needed her to move, but first she stepped up the pressure with her tongue and added another finger inside me. I could feel the slick evidence of my arousal as she thrust in and out.

Just as I was about to tumble over the edge of an orgasm, Scott lit another section of skin on my inner arm. I thought it would stop me from coming, but it was too late, and the pleasure and sting of the fire mixed together in a heady rush. I was breathing so heavily as I came down from it that I started to see spots.

Neither of my play partners was finished with me, though.

Raven stood up and circled around behind me, kissing my neck and running her fingertips over the places Scott had already lit. He began to work his way lower across my stomach and sides.

Raven reached a hand around and started working on my clit again, this time not bothering to withhold the orgasm. Since I had already come once, it was so much easier to make it happen again. She knew this and simply kept going until I couldn't tell where one explosion of pleasure ended and another began. Scott worked the fire back up my legs, starting at my calves, gradually focusing all the sensation closer to where Raven was working her magic.

By the time he was lighting the skin of my thighs, I was moaning incoherently, lost in a rush of pleasure and pain, fear and exhilaration. They probably would have continued the sweet torture for hours, but Scott was running out of fresh places to light and my skin was getting too raw to continue. With one more final orgasm, I hung limp in my bonds, lightheaded and giddy. It was an all-consuming, fiery bliss—and I couldn't wait to do it again.

Jenny Nordbak is a retired dominatrix and author of The Scarlett Letters: My Secret Year of Men in an L.A. Dungeon.

RAVEN THRUST A FINGER INSIDE ME, UNFAIRLY PULLING MY ATTENTION BACK TO HER AS SCOTT CONTINUED TO SWIPE, LIGHT, AND WIPE THE FIRE OUT.



TRACI TOPPS, December 1991

GLORIOUS AND VICTORIOUS

Of all the post-victory celebrations, football players have everyone beat. These big, dirty men padded by foam and fearlessness will spin across the field like they're doing a dance move from the musical *Grease*. What is it about winning that makes us lose control and turn into Jackie Wilson? Victory is a drug with a hangover we crave.

BRIE PHILLIPS, May 1978

LORETTA YBARRA, February 1983



COLLEEN CARNEY, August 1978



CYNTHIA GAYNOR, October 1977



MICKY HONSA, July 1988



DELIA COSNER, September 1980

JOELYN LUND, April 1985

HOT LINES:
CAN WE TALK ABOUT TOXIC FEMININITY?

BY LEAH MCSWEENEY

FIRST off, let me say that I can't believe I even have to write this. I wanted to keep this piece more about facts and less about my personal opinion, but it's impossible for me to do that. I need to get this shit out of my system. Because enough is enough.

On June 8th, celebrity chef, author, and food show host Anthony Bourdain hanged himself in his French hotel room. Although Bourdain had openly talked about his battles with addiction and depression, the world was shocked that he had taken his own life. The question on everyone's minds: Why would he do this?

However, as the days went by and the press storm raged on, another question arose, this one not about why Bourdain committed suicide, but about how his girlfriend, actress Asia Argento, and a friend of the couple, actress Rose McGowan, came to be feminist heroes to so many American women.

How are these things connected, besides the fact that Argento was dating Bourdain when he died?

Hear me out, because what has unfolded in the wake of Bourdain's death is a display of chronic, predatory narcissism from Argento and McGowan. These two women have used and abused the #MeToo movement—which they have been at the front lines of since the beginning—for their own personal gain. I know it's uncouth for me to say that, but I'm saying it. I'm uncouth. Kick me off the planet, ladies.


Asia Argento

I'm not arguing that Argento's public indiscretions with French journalist Hugo Clément caused Bourdain's death. (More on that later.) People cheat on one another. I've been there. Most of us have. Lust has a hard time steering your moral compass when you're drunk on pheromones. It's not the adulterous sex that eats you up inside, but the lie afterwards.

I, for one, have made a daily—okay, weekly, maybe monthly—commitment to owning my shit. That's the only way I've been able to quiet the noise inside my head and find any kind of peace in my life. (That, along with therapy, exercise, 12-step meetings, antidepressants, and so on.) To me, it's all about personal responsibility. Which is why I would never blame anyone for someone else's decision to kill themselves.

That said, it's ironic that since Bourdain's suicide, we have witnessed a display of totally irreconcilable behavior from two women who are among the most prominent faces of a movement that centers around accountability.

■■■

BORN in Rome, Asia Argento was raised in a family of famous Italian artists. Her father, Dario Argento, is a director and screenwriter best known for his innovative and influential horror movies. Her mother is the actress Daria Nicolodi, who starred in several of her husband's films. Beyond this, Argento has a lineage of family members who were musicians and composers, including her maternal grandfather, Alfredo Casella.

On October 10th of last year, journalist Ronan Farrow published a bombshell *New Yorker* article in which 13 women made allegations against Hollywood kingpin Harvey Weinstein, sharing accounts not only of sexual misconduct and harassment, but also rape.

Credited with initiating the contemporary #MeToo movement, the article detailed what it called Argento's rape experience with Weinstein, one very similar to Rose McGowan's own experience with the producer. Wrote Farrow: "Asia Argento, an Italian film actress and director, said that she did not speak out until now—Weinstein, she told me, forcibly performed oral sex on her—because she feared that Weinstein would 'crush' her." Argento went on to tell Farrow, "I know he has crushed a lot of people before. That's why this story—in my case, it's twenty years old, some of them are older—has never come out."

And you know what? I wasn't going to go there. But fuck it. I'm going there. I'm going there because someone needs to. American journalists today are scared. They are cowards. Their opinion pieces are timid when it comes to topics like this, while they share a much different view when texting in private. So here is the ugly fucking truth everyone, because you have all been spoon-fed a bunch of idealistic garbage over and over and over.

Argento and McGowan describe Weinstein giving them oral sex, and both say they faked an orgasm in hopes of getting the experience over with as fast as possible. Calling this "rape" is doing our society, including sexual-assault survivors, a disservice on so many levels. I was raped when I was 15 years old. I know a lot of women will accuse me of victim-blaming, but at some point we have to remove the impenetrable shield that one receives when she is considered a victim.

Argento went on to have a consensual relationship with Weinstein for several years. The *New Yorker* article is what thrust the Italian actress into America's cultural conversation. Before this, the American media knew little about her.

Make no mistake, Weinstein is a monster. He is a total predator, and I consider the women who spoke out against him to be very brave. But what Argento and McGowan are doing is not brave. In fact, it's disingenuous. Rape and sexual transactions are worlds apart, and they need to stay worlds apart.

ASIA ARGENTO PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY DENIS MAKARENKO

Argento was not blackmailed. She was not threatened. She had a sexual relationship with Weinstein which resulted in a transactional, consensual union, because—let's be honest—that's how Hollywood works. Fast-forward a few years and Argento saw a bigger opportunity: She could brand herself as a survivor.

■■■

ANTHONY Bourdain met Argento on the set of his wildly popular CNN show *Parts Unknown* when he was filming in Rome. Argento, a single mother of two and Italian celebrity, ended up a guest on the show. In February 2017, not long after they met on camera, the *New York Post* confirmed the two had started dating. One quick scroll through the couple's individual social media accounts reveals that Bourdain was completely smitten with Argento, posting photos of her on the regular with heartwarming comments.


Rose McGowan

Bourdain was openly supportive of Argento's involvement in the #MeToo movement as she rose to be one of its most prominent and vocal crusaders. Bourdain never held back when standing up for her or any part of the #MeToo movement, even defending McGowan and her feminist activism. The #MeToo movement had accrued a strong new male ally in Bourdain.

Bourdain had built his brand around captivating storytelling and a "no fucks given" attitude. He was honest about his shortcomings—struggles with drugs and alcohol and depression—while also detailing the craziness of the culinary world. My sister Sarah put me on to him after she read his memoir *Kitchen Confidential*. I stole her book when she was done, and I was hooked. We both were. How could you not be? Tall, successful, smart as fuck, bad boy, deep with a dark streak. The country swooned for Anthony Bourdain. He became our very own American ambassador. He made us proud, representing our nation while he traveled the world filming his series.

Bourdain gushed publicly over Argento, and when it came to her career, he was her biggest supporter. This is what you do when you love someone and believe in them. He wanted her to succeed because he adored her. His influence led to her new role as a judge on the Italian version of *X-Factor,* and he hired her to direct an episode of *Parts Unknown* when the series filmed in Hong Kong. The segment aired on June 3rd. In the closing scene, Bourdain stated what many of his fans had already figured out when it came to his feelings for Argento: "To fall in love *with* Asia is one thing. To fall in love *in* Asia is another. Both have happened to me."

But in the days leading up to his suicide, things between the couple seemed to get rocky.

On June 5th, three days before Bourdain's suicide, paparazzi photos of Argento and the young French reporter Clément, 28, were published in the Italian gossip magazine *Chi*. The photos showed the two holding hands, kissing, hugging, and dancing in a bar in Rome.

IT'S TOO BAD BOURDAIN ISN'T HERE TO CONFIRM THAT HE AND ARGENTO WERE "FREE BIRDS" WHO "LOVED WITHOUT BORDERS."

Argento fought to have the photographs pulled. Bourdain was mysteriously no longer following his girlfriend on Instagram. Argento then posted an Instagram story of herself in a Sid Vicious shirt that said FUCK EVERYONE, and captioned the image: "You know who you are." Three hours later he killed himself. And she deleted the image off of her Instagram story.

Hours after it was confirmed that Bourdain had died, Argento quickly posted a statement regarding her boyfriend's death on Instagram. We've all seen the message. It floated through the American media for weeks. Argento inserted herself into the coverage surrounding Bourdain's suicide, and received an outpouring of sympathy, while Bourdain's wife of ten years, Ottavia (the couple separated in 2016), remained silent and removed from the circus.

Why was Argento—who had only been dating Bourdain for a year and a half—speaking out on his behalf, instead of the woman he was legally married to at the time of his death, the mother of his 11-year-old daughter? Why has the American media been tiptoeing around the scandalous, romantic photos of Argento and Clément?

As numerous eloquent tributes to Bourdain were published, Argento decided she was too grief-stricken to continue speaking publicly, and handed the torch to Rose McGowan. The former *Charmed* star penned a letter to the public on behalf of Argento, which McGowan's publicist, Nathaniel Baruch at Brigade Marketing, promptly emailed to *Rolling Stone*.

McGowan's letter opens by saying Argento is now a victim not only of rape but of suicide.

"Sitting across from me," she writes, "is the remarkable human and brave survivor, Asia Argento, who has been through more than most could stand, and yet stand she does. She stood up to her monster rapist and now she has to stand up to yet another monster, suicide. The suicide of her beloved lover and ally, Anthony Bourdain. I write these truths because I have been asked to."

McGowan then discusses Bourdain and Argento's alleged "open relationship" in an obvious attempt to justify the photos with Clément. It's too bad Bourdain isn't here to confirm her statement that he and Argento were "free birds" who "loved without borders."

McGowan reminds the reader to "NOT do the sexist thing and burn a woman on the pyre of misplaced blame," and then says that Bourdain allegedly reached out to a doctor for help with his depression but did not take his advice. (How the fuck she knows that information and why she chose to disclose it remains a big fat question mark.)

McGowan also states that both Argento and Bourdain suffered from depression, but "she did the work to get help, so she could stay alive and live another day for her and her children," while Bourdain's depression usurped him. "His decision, not hers," McGowan writes. "His depression won."

■■■

WHAT is brave about manipulating a narrative surrounding a man's death? What is courageous about having McGowan speak on Argento's behalf, while Ottavia Bourdain has to tell her 11-year-old daughter that her father is never coming home? I can't even find a word to describe what that is. It is stomach-turning. To hide behind the story of being a rape survivor and to shelter one's self with the #MeToo movement is disgusting.

Why is the American media protecting Argento and McGowan's victim narrative? Why are they feeding it like the ugly, insatiable beast that it is? Have we forgotten that the #MeToo movement was started in 2006 by 44-year-old Tarana Burke to inspire healing for sexual assault survivors in her black community in the Bronx? I interviewed Burke on my podcast, Improper Etiquette, and her selfless story is so far removed from the celebrities like Argento and McGowan who have co-opted it. That said, would #MeToo have the power it does now without Hollywood's endorsement? Probably not. But that's a matter separate from the behavior of Argento and McGowan in the aftermath of Bourdain's passing.

Although Argento claimed she was so distraught that she required McGowan to be her voice, she has been very active on her social

ROSE MCGOWAN PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY KATHY HUTCHINS

media, filling her Instagram feed with stories and posts. In one of them she posed wearing a Suicidal Tendencies parody shirt while touting the hashtag #stayingalive.

In mid-June, a mysterious Instagram account called @justicefortony emerged, then shut down some days later (there were people on social media pushing for the account to be stopped.) However, when it was initially live, the first post was a black box with the following cryptic comment:

"Not surprised she blocked me. Having the truth out there was becoming too uncomfortable. She was a monster to him. She took an already very damaged and very sensitive man and destroyed him. His friends and coworkers tried their best to make him see what was going on, but he would just push everyone away. No one could say anything negative about Asia or Tony would try to remove them from his life."

The post went on to describe how Bourdain had one of his longtime crew members fired at Argento's request, and how much Bourdain had changed after dating the actress.

"In the end those pictures were too much," wrote the creator of @justicefortony, referring to the paparazzi photos of Argento and Clément. "He must have finally realized what she was doing and his world came crushing down."

So what led to Bourdain's death? Do we just say it was depression? I think suicide is a lot more complicated than that. It goes against everything our brain and body tell us to do. Most of us wake up every morning and try our best to stay alive. Basically, we do shit to *avoid* dying. But perhaps a person can hit their pain threshold, and everyone's is different.

Men don't deal with humiliation the same way women do. Men sometimes murder their lovers over humiliation. They also kill themselves over feeling humiliated. That doesn't mean that we women should be held responsible for men's behavior. Fuck no. But we *should* recognize how powerful we can be. We can choose to use our power any way we want. Maybe we should acknowledge that power, so we can proceed accordingly?

In the comment section of @justicefortony, its creator went on to detail the fighting that took place between Bourdain and Argento before his death.

"They started fighting on Tuesday," the person wrote. "Tony had to leave the set multiple times to talk to her on the phone. Things escalated on Wednesday when by all accounts she told him she no longer wanted to be with him. Everyone was keeping an eye on him all day and night because he was incredibly distraught."

@justicefortony went on to state that this was not the first time the couple had broken up, and that by Thursday, Bourdain seemed to be better and "kind of wanted everyone to back off."

Days later, @justicefortony continued, "Knowing this, her posts about Tony being her love and her rock were particularly distasteful. If she just disappeared and stopped harassing everyone, if she didn't have Rose write that awful letter, if she didn't try to gain from his death, I wouldn't be here writing this."

I would be skeptical of this random, anonymous reveal if it weren't for the fact that Ottavia Bourdain was following @justicefortony.

■■■

ON May 19th at the Cannes Film Festival, Argento gave a speech about her 1997 alleged rape by Weinstein. (From the audience, Clément filmed her address and posted it on his Twitter.) The *Washington Post* and other media outlets hailed the moment as "powerful."

I wouldn't call it powerful. Argento was onstage to present the award for Best Actress and used that spotlight to talk about herself and further her #MeToo agenda. Then she had the audacity to throw shade at Ava Duvernay for not giving her enough support as they shared the podium during her impromptu speech. Argento later tweeted to Mia Farrow that no one came up to her and acknowledged her speech except for Spike Lee. Did she give this speech with the expectation of praise, or to advocate for a movement she claims to deeply care about?

Earlier this year, McGowan published a memoir called *Brave*. It details her fight against the evil showbiz industry. Ironically, she then came out with an *E!* network reality show, *Citizen Rose,* to promote her book tour. So much for dismantling the evils of Hollywood.

When I first saw McGowan in the 1995 movie *Doom Generation,* I thought she was iconic. I was obsessed with that movie and her entire look. She had so many great moments during her career that I supported, including her barely-there chain dress on MTV's red carpet in the late nineties. And she had my support when she came out against Weinstein, but in hindsight, I question her claims and motives. I question if she understands how irresponsible it was to call her #RoseArmy to action when Weinstein released an email from her former manager that challenged her rape claims. (Her former manager, Jill Messick, committed suicide after the harassment from #RoseArmy.) So yeah, I question McGowan's movement. And it's my right to be able to do that.

WEINSTEIN IS A TOTAL PREDATOR, AND I CONSIDER THE WOMEN WHO SPOKE OUT AGAINST HIM TO BE VERY BRAVE. BUT WHAT ARGENTO AND MCGOWAN ARE DOING IS NOT BRAVE.

In May, McGowan hired accused child killer Casey Anthony's lawyer, Jose Baez, to represent her in court as she is facing up to ten years for cocaine possession. She claims that Weinstein planted the drugs in her wallet in an effort to delegitimize her.

Two women who dreamt of being famous movie stars have now selfishly and irresponsibly used the #MeToo movement to suck whatever amount of attention and fame they can from it. They have used this movement to help only themselves.

I don't think either of these women have a grasp of or are capable of understanding Tarana Burke's movement. And as much as I hate the term "white feminism" (that's the white feminist in me feeling defensive), these women are the epitome of what that is.

You can't hide shitty, awful behavior behind the excuse of misogyny. Not everything has to do with gender discrimination and the patriarchy, and to pretend that it does is a disservice to the feminist movement. I am all about fighting toxic masculinity, but to demand that all women must agree and support one another because we are the same gender is ridiculous and illogical. (Toxic femininity exists. We can't continue to deny that.) Maybe McGowan and Argento are just two really damaged human beings? I don't know. What I do know is that you cannot heal unless you own up to your shit and get real honest with yourself about who you are. These two women seem to be completely incapable of being honest with themselves.

In this new climate of public reckoning, #MeToo, and the Trump regime, we are all walking on eggshells, terrified to criticize anyone at the risk of being branded a sexist, a racist, or a homophobe. The kind of outrage that disagreement causes in 2018 makes it nearly impossible to seek truth through an exchange of ideas. I am saddened that this discourages people from speaking up. But I refuse to live in fear. I refuse to live my life worrying about who I will offend by speaking my mind. And I encourage you to do the same.

BOURDAIN-ARGENTO TIMELINE



May 16, 2017

Argento and Bourdain go public on Instagram.

May 19, 2018

Argento attends the Cannes Film Festival, where she gives a speech about Harvey Weinstein. Clément films the event from the audience and posts it on his social media. People respond with comments like "Goddess rising" and "This speech must have taken so much courage."

May 26, 2018

Bourdain and Argento wrap up filming *Parts Unknown* in Florence.

May 27-June 1, 2018

Bourdain travels to France to film the next episode of his series, while Argento returns home to Rome.

June 3, 2018

Parts Unknown airs the episode that Argento directed in Hong Kong. In the opening sequence, Bourdain is pictured alone on a ferry, writing in a journal while narrating his thoughts: "To fall in love w*ith* Asia is one thing. To fall in love *in* Asia is another. Both have happened to me." An obvious yet very romantic gesture and nod to his girlfriend. That day, IndieWire publishes an interview with Bourdain where he talks extensively about Argento. Here is an excerpt:

For Bourdain, bringing Argento further into his professional world proved to be a natural extension of their bond. "Look, anytime I can get work out of Asia—even random suggestions, like when she calls me mid-show to make me aware of a Nigerian psychedelic rock scene of the mid-to-late-'70s—that's a huge help to the show," he said. "I'd love to have her a continuing director. I just don't think we can afford her. But, my God, I'd love nothing more than to repeat the experience. She made it incredible."

Bourdain's relationship with Argento has overlapped with a dramatic chapter in her life, as the revelations about Weinstein's behavior included her own disclosures in Ronan Farrow's Pulitzer-winning story for the New Yorker. Argento endured traumatizing backlash from the media in her native Italy, and she fled the country as a result; she has been flinging a mixture of invective and messages of empowerment from her Twitter feed for months. "It's been a huge part of our life," Bourdain said. "As you can probably imagine, it's been very hard and continues to be very hard for Asia, but at the same time, it's inspiring. She's at the center of a conversation with a lot of women who want to share. That's something she takes really, really seriously."

June 6, 2018

More European outlets publish evidence of the alleged affair between Argento and Clément.

June 8, 2018

Bourdain misses breakfast and there's no response on his cell phone. A concerned Ripert has a receptionist unlock his hotel door and he is found dead by asphyxiation using the belt of his hotel bathrobe. (Three hours before Bourdain's death, Argento posted a cryptic photo on her Instagram story. The post showed Argento wearing a Sid Vicious T-shirt with the words FUCK EVERYONE, which she captioned, "You know who you are.")

February 20, 2017

Page Six confirms Anthony Bourdain and Asia Argento are dating.

April 17, 2018



French writer Huge Clément and Argento exchange words over Twitter. This is the first public contact between the two European celebrities. Clément starts "liking" Argento's posts later that day.

May 23, 2018



Bourdain and Argento meet in Florence, Italy, for *Parts Unknown*.

Weekend of June 1, 2018

Argento and Clément are seen coming and going from the Hotel de Russie, where she and Bourdain had often stayed during his visits with her in Rome. They were photographed multiple times by various European paparazzi. However, the controversial photos would not surface publicly until June 5.

June 4, 2018



Bourdain uploads his last post on social media.

June 5, 2018



The paparazzi photos of Argento and Clément in a romantic embrace surface online in the *Daily Mail* and are printed in several European gossip magazines such as *Public* and *Chi*. Word spreads throughout the European press. A Twitter user named @RoosterJones3 tweets at Bourdain, "Hugo Clement banging your girl Tony."

June 5, 2018, onward

Bourdain goes dark on social media. At some point during this time, Bourdain unfollows Argento on Instagram, or she blocks him, which causes an automatic unfollow. We can never be sure which move caused him to unfollow her.

June 7, 2018

Bourdain misses his regular dinner with renowned chef Éric Ripert and other friends at his five-star French hotel.

June 12, 2018

Page Six reports that the photographer who snapped the paparazzi shots of Argento and Clément admits he has regrets. "A picture is not worth a life," he stated. "If that shot triggered suicide…this would make me suffer."

GOING INTO THE DARK

HOW LEGENDARY DIRECTOR GREGORY DARK WENT FROM PORN TO POP.

INTERVIEW BY NINA MADISON

ONCE upon a time in Las Vegas, the Los Angeles-born son of a stripper and an occultist grew up devouring the sex-filled novels of Henry Miller and stoking an interest in beautiful women and art. Smart, bookish, and visually gifted, Gregory Dark ended up going to Stanford University, where he graduated with a Masters in Fine Art, before heading to New York University's prestigious graduate film school.

Returning to the city of his birth, the painter, conceptual artist, and budding filmmaker dove into L.A.'s burgeoning indie-film scene in the early 1980s. It was while directing a Showtime documentary about the porn industry, *Fallen Angels,* that Dark accepted an offer to direct his own porn film.

The deal set Dark on a path that would see him bring a new style and sensibility to porn, become a king of soft-core "erotic thrillers" in the nineties, and hit it big as a music-video director in the aughts (think Britney, Mandy Moore, Linkin Park, etc.). Oh, and he directed pro wrestler Kane, who played a deranged serial killer in the 2006 horror movie *See No Evil*. And did we mention New York's Whitney Museum owns one of Dark's early paintings?

Transgressive in his hard-core films (the "Martin Scorsese of the erotic thriller," as he was once called) and a music-video helmer with more than a hundred credits to his name, Dark became the father of "alt porn," bringing edge and a New Wave look to onscreen smut. And if anyone's responsible for today's porn stars looking more like pop singers and vice versa, it's Gregory Dark.

Currently, the versatile Angeleno is pursuing a Ph.D. in psychology, of all things. "I was curious about human behavior and subconscious and conscious processes," Dark explains by phone. We talked to this influential artist and director, now 61 years old, about his life, his achievements, and how he got into porn in the first place.

How did your Las Vegas childhood influence your films?

My cousin owned one part of the Dunes Hotel and Casino. I would go to shows, where there would be these dancers and so-called models and topless showgirls. I started to go backstage to see my cousin, and I would see these women walking around naked. They all seemed to be tall, given that I was only nine years old. That was when I started getting interested in pretty women.

At Stanford and NYU, were you interested in exploring sex as a director?

Making porn was an accident. When I went to Stanford, I was into voodoo rituals. Later, in L.A., a guy named Richard Lerner came to me and said, "I just met this porn agent Jim South, and it was the craziest, most insane experience. This would be a phenomenal documentary if we just hung out at his agency." The appeal was Jim's personality, which was like a Texas car salesman, and how he would convince these girls to be in the adult industry by appealing to their narcissism. While I was interviewing the owner of the porn company VCA for the film, the guy said to me, "Have you ever thought about making a porno film?" And I said, "I could make a better film than any of these people!"

Why did you believe that?

I was more interested in the experimental films of Stan Brakhage than I was in Hollywood movies, and I thought I could make conceptual art films with sex—films not conventionally erotic but the antithesis of erotic while still showing the act of having sex. In those days, most people were used to porn movies with soap-opera plots and characters. In my movies, people actually wanted to have sex. They went wild. Women had orgasms. The women I cast *wanted* to have orgasms. You let them go. I would talk to them, tell them how beautiful they were and appeal to their narcissism.

Is that also how you dealt with pop stars?

Female pop stars hired me to make them as beautiful as I could, so I tried to make them feel good about themselves and feel natural and comfortable. The better they felt about themselves, the higher their self-esteem during shooting. The more natural the experience, the more naturally beautiful they would look.

How did the Britney Spears thing happen?

I worked for an agency at the time and a rep there told me, "Jive Records wants you to do a Britney Spears video." I had no clear understanding as to why. I spoke to the president of the label and he said, "I want her to be buttoned-up and normal and natural. I want her covered up, to be pure and innocent." I said, "Great! That's an interesting conceit." It's the fetish of how pure, how normal, she looks.

That was a challenging experience in itself, because she was not a toned-down girl. She was flamboyant—she did what she wanted to do. The job description was to make her look wholesome, virginal, the girl-next-door. The good girl you could be friends with, who would be a great person to console you if you did something wrong. It also played into that fantasy.

You made Britney look more virginal, while your first big porn film, *New Wave Hookers,* in 1985, made porn stars look more like rock stars. How'd that idea come about?

I was driving down Melrose Avenue and I saw these girls that were New Wave-y, less so than punk girls, with hair colors and different kinds of things. I thought, *Wow! Wouldn't it be interesting to do a porno movie with these kinds of looks?* I dressed porn stars like all these club girls you saw on Melrose. Nobody did that before.



ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES SILK

That movie and your music videos, like the one for Mandy Moore's "Walk Me Home," utilized brilliant colors. Was that by design?

I didn't do that consciously. I worked with a phenomenal colorist at that time. In the video for Linkin Park's "One Step Closer," there's a lot of candy colors, but they're contrasted with dark tones. *New Wave Hookers* had some of that, but a lot of the coloring was based on hair spray bottles.

What about parallels between your sexy thrillers, like the ones starring Shannon Whirry, and your other work?

I invented a genre of erotic thrillers, like *Body of Influence*. They were female-empowerment stories that had morality and negative endings. These have more similarities to the pop-star videos than they do to the pornos.

You've worked with actors, porn stars, pop stars, rock stars, rappers, and a pro wrestler. How was Kane?

Kane was easy to work with. He understood acting and was more similar to the actors in the erotic thrillers. Some porn stars are less easy to work with.

Was it the thrillers that led Vince McMahon's World Wrestling Entertainment to hire you for *See No Evil*?

No, they hired me because of the music videos. Also, I think because Vince McMahon liked that I was a porno director once!

Nina Madison is a sex-positive writer based in California. She holds a Bachelor of Arts, with a focus on Women's History and LGBTQI literature, from Sarah Lawrence College.



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BLONDE AMBITION

Alexis Ford and Summer Brielle were not getting along after Alexis ruined Summer's most expensive purse. Needless to say their friendship was on the rocks. Then they remembered that they are both hot, horny blondes who would rather fuck than fight, so they made up the right way.

Photography: Gerald De Behr













B-17 Bomber during the first big raid on Germany by the U.S. 8th Air Force. The raid destroyed most of the Marienburg Focke-Wulf aircraft factory. World War 2. October 9, 1943

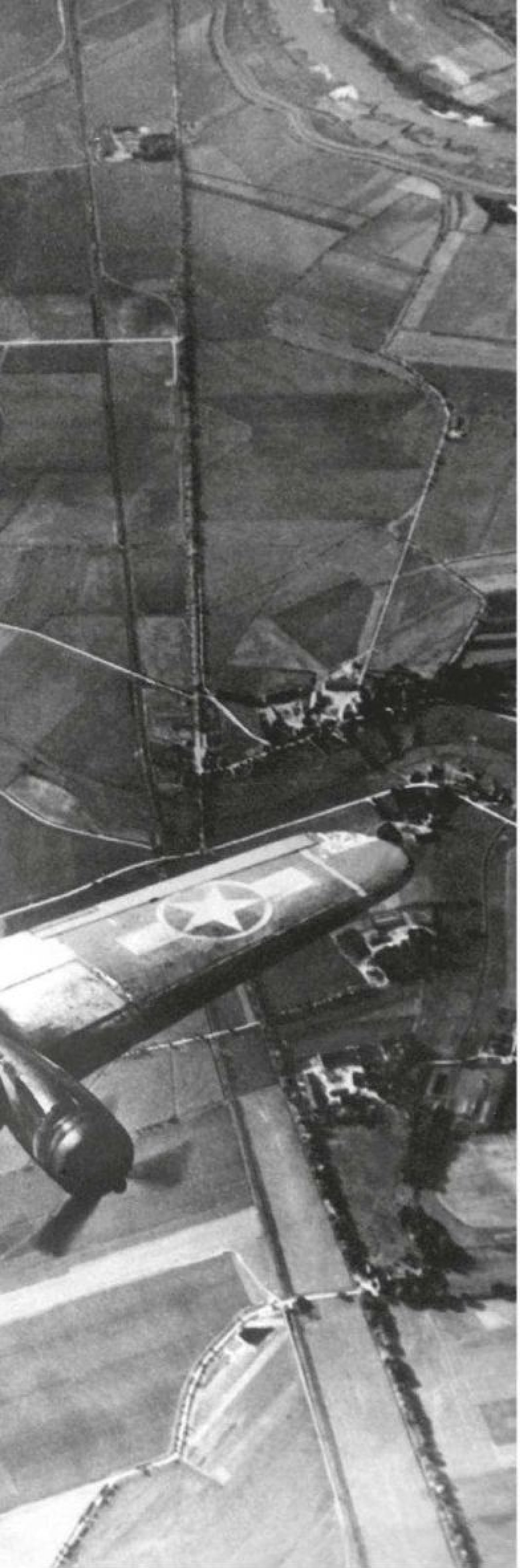


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY EVERETT HISTORICAL

THE NEXT GREAT WAR

POST WORLD WAR II, AMERICA'S WAR RECORD HAS BEEN UP AND DOWN. WHAT IF THERE'S ANOTHER BIG ONE?

BY MATT GALLAGHER

HOW come America doesn't win its wars anymore?"

Why yes, this is the Victory Issue! So let's explore questions of defeat and stalemate. Like the one above, asked to me by a fucking ten-year-old in a classroom I was visiting last year.

No, he wasn't being sarcastic. The question was earnest as a hurricane. I wish he'd been kidding.

I stammered out some shit about war being different now, or at least about the terror wars being different than the classic force-on-force style we've all been watching in World War II movies since we were in the womb. I compared the challenges of hunting down and eradicating terror cells on the far edges of the globe to the centuries-long fights against pirates. (Give me a break, I was on the spot.) Then I said some words about terrorism being an ideology, not a state actor, and can radical ideologies ever really be eradicated? We're only two generations removed from our grandfathers kicking Nazi ass and saving the world from fascism, and yet fat pasty morons still march on American campuses touting the same tripe. And then I talked a bit about victory in war not always meaning a signed treaty on a battleship, just that some strategic objectives have been met.

The kids stared back at me with wide blank eyes, somewhere between confusion and boredom. It was hard to tell the difference. I didn't blame them. I'd have been doing the same in their shoes.

Seriously, though: How come America doesn't win its wars anymore? Since the aforementioned WW II, only small, limited engagements like Desert Storm and Grenada line up clearly in the "W" column for Uncle Sam. Korea was a stalemate, Vietnam our country's first definite L. (This is where pedantic War of 1812 history goons will try to chime in. Don't let them. They are the worst.) Afghanistan, like death, taxes, and an inept Congress, endures and endures, no end in sight. I'm not sure what Iraq was, and I'll probably spend the rest of my life trying to reconcile the very real hope and sense of achievement my unit came home with in early 2009 with the images and reel footage we've all seen since.

All those other places our military's engaging the enemy—Somalia, Niger, Syria, the Philippines, etc.—do those count as wars? How can they, when sometimes our own elected representatives don't even know we have personnel there? How can they not count, though, when there are bullets



AMERICA NO LONGER FIGHTS LIKE A REPUBLILC. AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT WOULD FORCE THAT UPON US IN A WAY ONLY THE OLDEST *PENTHOUSE* READERS HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED FIRSTHAND.

flying toward American soldiers and Marines wear our flag on their shoulders?

To quote those bad boys of Scottish hip-hop Stanley Odd, "It's All Gone to Fuck."

Some friends (usually) on the right argue that America won't find martial victory again until our military is "let off the leash"—that contemporary laws of war and rules of engagement lead to our soldiers having to fight in a limited way. I'm always a little bamboozled when I hear this argument. What other country possesses and has used a Mother of All Bombs like we did in Afghanistan last year? What other military can deploy its special operators across dozens of other nations at once and not fear immediate reprisal? But it'd be foolish to not acknowledge the prevalence of this argument.

On the other side, some friends (usually) on the left often make vague references to non-interventionism, like we all haven't spent our entire lives benefitting from an international order established in 1946 that relies most directly on the threat and use of American military intervention. We're all complicit, even when (maybe especially when) we're not aware of it.

My friend Brian Castner, a former explosive ordnance disposal officer turned writer, likes to say that we Iraq veterans fought in a contemporary Boer War after joining up thinking we'd be fighting something much grander. The Boer War comparison doesn't end there, though, because if it's accurate, it means, he says, another "Great War is coming." Given the tides of authoritarian madness swirling worldwide, a possible trade war with China upcoming (fucking Christ), not to mention those terror wars that never seem to end, it's hard for me to think Castner's wrong, even on my most optimistic days.

But—but! Historically, we're at our best—as a people, as a nation of ideas, and yes, as a military—when there's a direct existential threat. As I examined all those little wars over the course of the last 70 years for this article, that's what I kept returning to. None of them were existential threats to any of that, even if on the morning of September 12, 2001, it may've felt otherwise. (We all lost our minds on 9/11, though, didn't we?) I've written here before that America no longer fights like a republic. An existential threat would force that upon us in a way only the oldest *Penthouse* readers have ever experienced firsthand.

Here's hoping it doesn't come to that. War is never glory. It is always state-sanctioned violence to be turned to only when absolutely necessary. If it does, though, if my man Castner's correct about what awaits in the coming years—well, take it away, Winston Churchill, you loud, proud British loon:

"You can always count on Americans to do the right thing. After they've tried everything else."

I should've told those kids that. The perfect response.

Next time, I guess.

Matt Gallagher is a U.S. Army veteran of Iraq and the author of the novel Youngblood (Atria/Simon & Schuster).

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JUSTICE? HAHAHAHAHA!

ONE COMEDIAN'S GRIPES AGAINST WHAT WE WERE TAUGHT TO BELIEVE.

BY JOE DEROSA

"Justice is lost, justice is raped, justice is gone.
Pulling your strings, justice is done."—Fuckin' Metallica, bro!

NO, I'm not citing that lyric because I'm jamming Metallica's …*And Justice for All* as I write this. Though I am, incidentally. It ROCKS BALLS. But that's not my reason for quoting it. For once I decided to start the column with the words of someone I actually agree with.

I usually begin by shitting on somebody, but not this month. Maybe I'm just in a good mood because my birthday's around the corner? (Side note: A first-pressing vinyl of *A.J.F.A.* would make a fine b-day gift.) In any case, Metallica frontman James Hetfield was spot-on when he viciously snarled out his assessment of modern justice. (Another side note: I swear he never reminded me of Fozzy Bear until I saw the images below.)





See what I mean?

Anyway, justice is many things, but most importantly, justice is over, kaput, DONE, if it ever existed in the first place. Why? Simple premise: It lies in the hands of human beings and we absolutely excel at overcomplicating, polluting, and/or mishandling the most basic of sensical premises. We can't even give comic book fans what they want from the average superhero franchise—just go watch *Justice League*. (No pun intended.)

Merriam-Webster defines justice as "the maintenance or administration of what is just especially by the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishments." For starters, let's take "merited rewards or punishments." You're supposed to get what you deserve. The good shall be rewarded and the foul shall be condemned! That said, allow me to ask you this: When the fuck's the last time you can remember that ever being the case?

Also, "the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims"? There was basically one period in history when the concept of judgment without prejudice existed, and it was between Adam and Eve (I know they're not real, which strengthens my point) for about two days. To quote Metallica again, it's "Sad but True" that everything from money to racism to sexism to a plain old bad mood will and has deterred judges, bosses, parents, and teachers from properly governing conflict. I believe this is why the conservative-sounding phrase "life just ain't fair" is used so liberally throughout our lifetimes.

While we're at it, let's look at some of our other language on the subject of justice. *Bad things always happen to good people. Nice guys finish last. Social justice warrior.* Why would someone ever need to be a warrior unless they were fighting tooth and nail to instate something that didn't already exist? And of all the justice idioms, the most accurate, of course, is *Justice is blind*. She certainly is, as in, she never seems to see shit. That's one chick that undoubtably subscribes to the "snitches get stitches" policy.

If there wasn't so much disparity in this world, we wouldn't need an endless stream of hashtags promoting balance and fairness—#MeToo, #Blklivesmatter, the list goes on and on. And have you watched the news lately? If so, you know the assumption that justice will be properly served is like assuming your drive-thru order will be properly prepared. It's a nice surprise when it is, but there's no way we should count on it happening again next time. News stories about current criminal events play out like old film noir flicks—plot twist after plot twist, rich and powerful men getting away with absolute heinousness, innocent and unsuspecting citizens falling victim to unhinged violence, and *Haters Back Off* being canceled while *Master of None* is STILL going strong (not illegal, but criminal, nonetheless).

Then again, Netflix did give *Chelsea* the boot, so perhaps some hope does exists. I define "hope" as the slight faith in something justified potentially happening every great once in a while. Merriam-Webster wouldn't agree, but to them I ask this—out of all the brands of justice, why is poetic the type I've seen occur most frequently? I'm not kidding. In my experience, poetic justice, which rests on and requires the element of irony, has had a higher success ratio then actual justice. Anything depending on strange coincidence is hardly systematic and

PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK.COM: JAMES HETFIELD PHOTO BY YULIA GRIGORYEVA, FOZZY BEAR PHOTO BY HARMONY GERBER, CONCEPT PHOTO BY PRAZIS IMAGES



YOU DON'T HAVE TO DIG TOO DEEPLY INTO A HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES BOOK TO LEARN THAT JUSTICE NOT BEING DEALT FOR US LEADS TO US DEALING FOR OURSELVES.

not at all reliable for the "administration of what is just."

Okay. I've pointed enough fingers at the other guy, time to turn one back on us. Let's look at our long, lengthy, lurid history of taking matters into our own hands. You don't have to dig too deeply into a high school social studies book to learn that justice not being dealt for us leads to us dealing for ourselves. Disgruntled vigilantes, unhappy packs of torch-wielding maniacs, we love this shit. There's a reason we root for Batman and it's not very different from the one that made the townsfolk descend on Marie Antoinette.

Obviously, there are sometimes benefits to bucking the system in this sense—dealing with the Riddler or an asshole that says, "Let them eat cake"—but those are rare. For the most part, our attraction to DIY justice has only led to misguided lynch mobs and a string of shitty Charles Bronson sequels. Once again, the problem is us. Whether the righteous sword is wielded by an institution or an individual, it usually spills the wrong blood.

To sum things up, we're fucked. Judge Sturgess once said, "Justice is open to everyone in the same way as the Ritz Hotel." Norm Crosby quipped, "When you go into court you are putting your fate into the hands of twelve people who weren't smart enough to get out of jury duty." And finally, philosopher Bertrand Russell stated, "One should as a rule respect public opinion in so far as necessary to avoid starvation and to stay out of jail, but anything that goes beyond this is voluntary submission to an unnecessary tyranny." There you have it. Justice good, people bad.

However, don't let the last glimmer of light fade from your eyes just yet. There still are a few reliable positives in this world you can turn to for illumination. The first being Chelsea Handler not soiling your television feed (at least for now), and the second knowing that any Metallica album, at any time or any place, including portions of both *Load* and *Reload,* will rock your balls off.

Joe DeRosa is an L.A.-based comedian, writer, director, and actor (Better Call Saul and Louie). His multiple stand-up specials and albums can be found online, as well as his podcasts We'll See You in Hell and Emotional Hangs.



SEX WITH MY EX

SEX when we were married was terrible. It felt like we had been incompatible from the start. She was never willing to experiment in the slightest—she wouldn't even suck my dick. I resented that she wouldn't even try, so I stopped trying to please her. I don't even know why we kept having sex when we were both so clearly not into it, but we did the obligatory deed fairly regularly, right up until we decided to divorce.

Since we didn't have kids and weren't rich, there wasn't much to fight over when we split, but we fought nonetheless. By the time we signed the paperwork dissolving our marriage, I hoped never to see her again.

I managed not to for about a year, but we don't live in a big city and neither of us had moved far, so it was bound to happen eventually. Of course it couldn't have been at the grocery store or at church or somewhere we would have to be civil and then go about our business. Instead, we both ended up at the same karaoke bar on a busy Saturday night… and we were both pretty drunk.

I was pissed that she showed up, but I had to admit she looked damn good in a skintight minidress and sky-high heels. She never wore anything that revealing when we were together, and I couldn't help commenting on it.

"You looking to get laid this evening?" I asked, coming up behind her.

When she turned and saw it was me, she glared and said, "If I was, it wouldn't be with you. You're terrible in bed."

I almost choked on the swig of beer I'd just taken.

"I'm not terrible. You're fucking boring and wouldn't ever do anything. How can I be bad at nothing?"

I don't completely remember the rest of our argument, but somehow our angry words started to be laced with something else—some kind of pent-up, unexplored lust between us that I never would have expected. We went back to our friends, but as the night wound down, and we got a few more drinks in us, we found ourselves in the same Uber headed back to my apartment.

We barely made it through the door before she threw herself at me and kissed me hard, unbuttoning my pants as she pushed me inside. We frantically stripped each other's clothes off, and it was bizarre how someone I had lived with and seen naked thousands of times could already feel like a stranger again.

She pushed me back onto the couch, then dropped to all fours on the rug. She literally crawled the last few steps toward me, back arched, ass up like some kind of sexy, prowling catwoman.

My ex maintained eye contact with me as she took my dick in her hand and ran her tongue around the head. She kept glancing up at me with the sexiest look when she slid it into her mouth, dragging her tongue along the base as she bobbed her head up and down.

SHE CRAWLED THE LAST FEW STEPS TOWARD ME, BACK ARCHED, ASS UP LIKE SOME KIND OF SEXY, PROWLING CATWOMAN.

Who the fuck was this vixen and where had she been the whole time we were married?

She had obviously been practicing sucking dick because she was now an expert, but I didn't want to think about that in the moment. Instead, I sunk back into the couch and enjoyed the outcome.

I stopped her before I came, determined to prove that I wasn't bad in bed. Maybe that's all we were both trying to do….

I switched spots with her and stripped her panties off, delighted to discover that she now apparently shaved down there, too. I started licking her clit and fingering her.

It seemed like it took forever, but when I finally felt her pussy clenching around my fingers, I realized I had never made her come like this before. Loving the feel of her wet pussy, I wanted to keep going and make it happen again, but instead she stopped me and bent over the couch in invitation.

I pushed my dick between her pussy lips and thrust forward, amazed at how good it felt to be balls-deep inside my ex-wife.

"Fuck me hard! Pull my hair!" she cried out.

I did as she asked, wrapping her hair in my fist and yanking back firmly. I felt powerful holding her like that while pounding into her.

"Fuck my dirty whore cunt! You're so deep in my sopping wet pussy!"

Hearing her scream words that she would never have uttered before was such a turn-on that I couldn't hold it anymore, and I came with an explosive shudder.

As we sat panting next to each other on the couch, I had to ask, "Where the fuck did *that* come from?"

She just smiled at me and shrugged.

"Were we a little hasty with the whole divorce thing?"

She stood up and retrieved her sex kitten clothes, treating me to an incredible view of her beautiful bare pussy as she bent over to pull her panties back on.

"Don't get sappy on me. It was just sex," she said without even looking at me.

My ex-wife was now a man-eater, and fuck if it didn't make me want her even more.

"If it was just sex, then we should do it again," I suggested, eliciting a smirk from her.

"Okay, let's do it again…right now," she said, straddling me on the couch.

Divorce, you could say, had been good for our marriage. At least that night it was. As she was leaving, I suggested a sequel. She didn't rule it out.

—Jason S., Portsmouth, New Hampshire

BROTHER BONDING

WHEN I was in my late 20s, I thought my boyfriend was the most attractive man I'd ever seen. And then I met his stepbrother.

How could two such good-looking men have coexisted in a household growing up? My boyfriend had all-American good looks. With his shaggy blond hair and bright blue eyes, he looked like the quarterback of my high school fantasies. His brother, on the other hand, looked villainous, with jet-black hair and eyes so dark it seemed like he didn't have irises.

Besides both being ridiculously handsome, they didn't have much in common. My boyfriend, Steve, was outgoing, charming, and laid-back. His brother, Pierce, seemed like he took life too seriously and was always analyzing everything around him. Despite how I attractive I found him, Pierce intimidated me because I always got the impression he didn't like me. Turns out I was wrong.

We were staying in a cabin together over a holiday weekend when things between the three of us went in an unexpected direction. We had just been hanging out drinking in the living room. On my way back from the kitchen with more beers for all of us, Steve pulled me onto his lap and started kissing my neck. It felt good, but I wasn't comfortable doing it in front of Pierce. I didn't want him to feel like the third wheel, but Steve was obviously too drunk to care.

Instead of excusing himself or awkwardly playing on his phone while his brother kissed his way down to my collarbone, Pierce stared straight at me with hunger in his eyes. I stared right back, feeling a naughty thrill at the exhibitionism of it. I might have been a little tipsy, too.

Pierce's eyes flicked down when Steve's hand slid its way across my hip and into my sweatpants. As he reached my clit, my cheeks heated with embarrassment, torn between stopping Steve and letting him keep going just to see what would happen.

Pierce put his beer down as though he had come to some kind of decision, and I thought he was going to head to his room, but instead he came and sat on the other side of me on the couch.

"Okay if I join you guys?" Pierce asked, as though it was the most natural thing in the world.

Steve chuckled. "Ask the lady," he said.

I paused, wanting it so bad but worried things would be weird between us afterward. The wanting part won out.

Instead of answering, I reached over and put my hand on Pierce's crotch, smirking at the feel of his impressive erection. After that, there was no more talking. Our clothes came off and we just got lost in the moment.

The brothers sat back down on the couch and pulled me on all fours across them. I took Steve's dick in my mouth, sucking hard in my excitement at finally having something inside of me.

I didn't have to wait long for more as I felt

I WAS SHOCKED WHEN HIS PALM SMACKED MY ASS HARD, LEAVING A WARM STINGING FEELING.

Pierce's warm hands squeezing my ass. One of his fingers trailed down and across my pussy, making me clench with need. He dipped between my folds and I knew he could feel how wet I was. He dragged his wet finger up to my clit and started rubbing in deliciously slow circles. I pushed back against him, wanting more.

I was shocked when his palm smacked my ass hard, leaving a warm stinging feeling that wasn't unpleasant. He did it again and I moaned in protest, but gave myself away when I pushed my ass back up for more. Steve pressed my head down harder on his dick, forcing it into my throat. He wasn't usually that assertive, and I liked this new side of him.

Pierce kept spanking me while he played with my clit, occasionally trailing his fingers over my asshole and making me wonder if they were planning to try double penetration. I was equally terrified and exhilarated by the idea. Unfortunately, my boyfriend didn't hold out long enough to experiment. Maybe it was watching his brother spank me, but he came way faster than he normally did. I swallowed and looked up to see a huge smile on his face as he continued to watch what his brother was doing.

Pierce leaned over me, still rubbing my clit, and whispered in my ear, "May I fuck you now?"

Steve looked down and nodded slightly, letting me know it was my call. That was all I needed.

"Fuck me, Pierce. Please fuck me now!"

He left the couch, and I pouted at his absence, but he came back wearing a condom and ready to go. Almost immediately I felt his cock pressing against my entrance, stretching me as he worked it in. Steve took over rubbing my clit and kissing me, sliding his tongue into my mouth as Pierce thrust all the way into me.

Both of their hands were all over my body, cupping and touching with total confidence. I came instantly, but Pierce kept going, fucking me in a steady rhythm that was driving me wild. I came at least three more times before he finally thrust even deeper and came as well.

We untangled from our naked heap on the couch, retrieving our clothes and our beers. Things were a little awkward the next morning, but I was determined to make it happen again. Now that I'd had them both, I only wanted more.

—Stephanie L., Cedar Rapids, Iowa

COUGAR HOUR

I HAVE been a DJ for a Cleveland classic-rock station for eight years now. I like the job, I like the city—it also helps that I like classic rock.

My first paid radio gig began a few years after college, and for the most part I've been at rock stations—classic and alternative. But for two years, in my early 30s, I hosted a Cleveland show I helped create called "Night Thoughts," which aired on a talk-radio station.

Listeners didn't call in like on the station's other shows. People who wanted to be on "Night Thoughts" sent emails, and I read the ones I selected on the air. The show's premise was pretty simple: people would share intimate feelings, dark secrets, existential woes—stuff too hot to divulge by phone. It aired midnight until 2 A.M., three nights a week.

PIERCE LEANED OVER ME, STILL RUBBING MY CLIT, AND WHISPERED IN MY EAR, "MAY I FUCK YOU NOW?"

To create enough content, and add variety, I also worked in relevant tidbits from pop culture and history, stuff having to do with confessions and indiscretions and kinks and other kinds of revelations. We aired brief audio clips from TV and movies revolving around same. I remember playing Bobby Vinton's version of "Blue Velvet," which went to No. 1 in 1963, and then talking about the David Lynch movie *Blue Velvet*. I even tried to get Dennis Hopper to call in and discuss his role in that movie (his character, Frank Booth, was the one with the fetish for touching blue velvet while inhaling nitrous oxide), but got nowhere.

At this time in my life I was having a lot of fun, partying when I could, not feeling ready to settle down. Around me, friends I'd known since high school were getting married and buying houses, but the idea of eyeballing carpet squares with my wife for an hour while a baby drooled on my shoulder just did not appeal.

One Wednesday afternoon, while reading through a bunch of show submissions, I found a confession from a woman who used the pseudonym "Lisa." People submitted anonymously, using a box on our website, and we asked them to pick a pseudonym. I liked what Lisa had written, and I added it to my "Yes" pile.

That night, halfway though my shift, I read her submission on-air. I have a pretty mellow voice and personality in general, and it seemed to work for this show and its late hour.

"Okay, folks," I said into the mic, "next up, a woman calling herself Lisa, and she—well, she's taking us inside her boudoir. Lisa writes, 'I love my husband, but it's gotten so stale in bed. We're college sweethearts. We got married in our early twenties. We have three kids and a great life, but lately, it's felt more like good friends that share a bed. There's no spark. My husband doesn't know this, but I've started masturbating to





other men. I think about other guys all the time. I feel guilty for it, but I also understand why this is happening. I'm even thinking of maybe looking beyond my marriage for some passion."

Letter over, I said, "Hey, you wouldn't mind a little"—and here I pushed one of my go-to sound-effect buttons, which made a *sizzle* sound—before adding, "We get it, Lisa. We get it. And do not for a moment think you're the first married woman in need of a little"—I cued another *sizzle*. Then I said, "Good people of 'Night Thoughts,' we have our winner for a pair of tickets to see Def Leppard on the 23rd. It's tonight's top prize, winner selected at random, and I'm happy to say Lisa who needs some"—*sizzle*—"is headed to the Q!"

Two days later, on Friday afternoon, on my way out of the station building to grab a late lunch, I walked by the lobby desk just as a stunner of a woman, mid-40s, tight T-shirt, tight jeans, and wedge sandals, said to the receptionist, "Hi, I'm here to pick up some station tickets for NT114." We coded the prize envelopes to preserve anonymity.

I had no idea who she was. I just knew she'd won something. But she recognized me, and caught up to me a few seconds later. "Hey, Jeremy," she said. "I love your show."

There was a brief pause, she looked at me with gorgeous green eyes, her expression turned mischievous, and she whispered, using air-quotes, "I'm Lisa." A moment after that she held up the sealed envelope and said almost as softly, "Def Leppard. I'm excited."

"Oh, wow, very cool. Thanks for listening. Good to meet you, Lisa," I said, air-quoting the name. That's all I had. Her breasts in the black tee were amazing, perfect cantaloupes. She had caramel hair that fell past her slim shoulders. Her legs were long, her waist small.

Then I just stood there, silent. Here I was, a professional yakker, at a loss for words.

"Hey, I don't know how busy you are," she said. "Any interest in a drink?"

I had interest. My next show was the following night, and I'd gotten most of my prep done already.

We went to a bar next door and ordered vodka sodas. I wouldn't have minded if one of my station buddies had run into me sitting with this gorgeous MILF. I was single at the time, and I'd have had a story for them later, the way I met her. But it was just the two of us in a back corner, the light pretty low.

I heard about her marriage, about a lawyer

HER TONGUE WAS ON MY COCK, HER ASS IN MY FACE, AND WE ENDED OUR MARATHON DOING 69.

husband who was in Atlanta for some kind of corporate merger, about her three boys, the youngest nine, all three at summer camp. It was obvious the husband raked it in, as they lived in a gated suburban community called Birch Hill.

As we talked about our lives, I thought of her listening to my late-night show—it was clear she did listen—in bed with the husband away, or curled up in a chair when this guy was home, asleep in their bed. I also thought about being in bed with her.

After she finished her third drink, Elizabeth—that was her real name—placed a manicured hand on my thigh, held my gaze, and said simply, "Do you want to come over?"

Barely 30 minutes later we were entering her large brick colonial at the end of a leafy cul-de-sac, the driveway entrance gated just like the entrance to Birch Hill. We'd held hands for part of the cab ride, but that was it. Still, I was out of my mind with anticipation, and had basically been hard ever since she touched my thigh.

Elizabeth led the way into a grand living room and asked if she could fix me a drink. "Sure," I said. "Scotch on the rocks." She came back with the whiskey and a glass of wine for herself, sat beside me on a couch, and we sipped our drinks as we talked and laughed, both of us pretty relaxed, considering the situation.

Then, without a word, she set the wine down, got on her knees before me, opened my jeans, and began to suck my dick. My head spun. Her mouth felt perfect. I touched her soft brown hair. I reached around her narrow ribcage and caressed her firm, fantastic tits. She cupped my balls, and her velvet tongue circled the head of my throbbing cock.

As I began to thrust into her mouth, she straightened up and in a few quick moves pulled off her snug T-shirt and large black bra, revealing round, lightly tanned D-cups that to me in that moment were the most beautiful breasts I'd ever seen.

She went back to my cock, driving me mad with her mouth, and then, as I got close, she looked up at me through her thick black lashes and said, "How do you want to fuck?"

I said the first thing that came into my mind: "Every way we can." And that's exactly what we did for the next hour.

Elizabeth was insatiable, and the rest of her body was as perfect as her tits. I can still play that hour back in my mind like a movie: her sexy flat stomach, her amazing ass as I screwed her from behind, those long thighs that I dipped between when I licked her shaved pussy, and that squeezed my sides as I fucked her on the couch.

Afterward, we lay side by side on the floor, wiped out, grinning, staring at the ceiling. More than once my hand drifted to those tits, and once again my cock would start to stir. I was so blissed out, I closed my eyes, and then moments later her tongue was on my cock again, her ass in my face, and we ended our marathon doing 69 until Elizabeth came with a wail.

We showered together, got dressed, and she called me a cab. I said, "So what are you doing tonight?" She smiled. "It's a girls' night, actually. More wine. Cheese. Talk."

I said, "I'd love to go to the concert with you, but...." She'd already told me she wasn't looking to have a full-blown affair, and couldn't risk any more public meetings. But it turned out she was a legit Def Leppard fan, and she was going to take her best friend.

A few weeks later, on the 23rd, I was at the office, prepping for getting on the air at midnight. I pictured Elizabeth in black leather pants, stilettos—that's what she said she'd wear to the show. I played some Def Leppard, and I remembered that heavenly time at the house in Birch Hill.

—Jeremy C., Cleveland, Ohio

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